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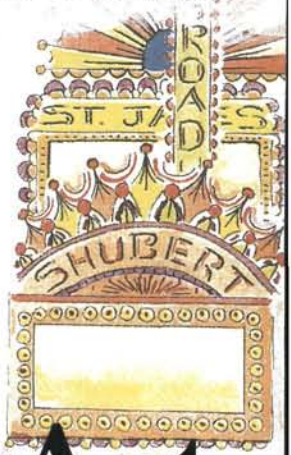
Garry Wills on Michael Deaver

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: HOPE FOR THE HOMELESS • THE GREATEST PAINTER OF THE HOLOCAUST

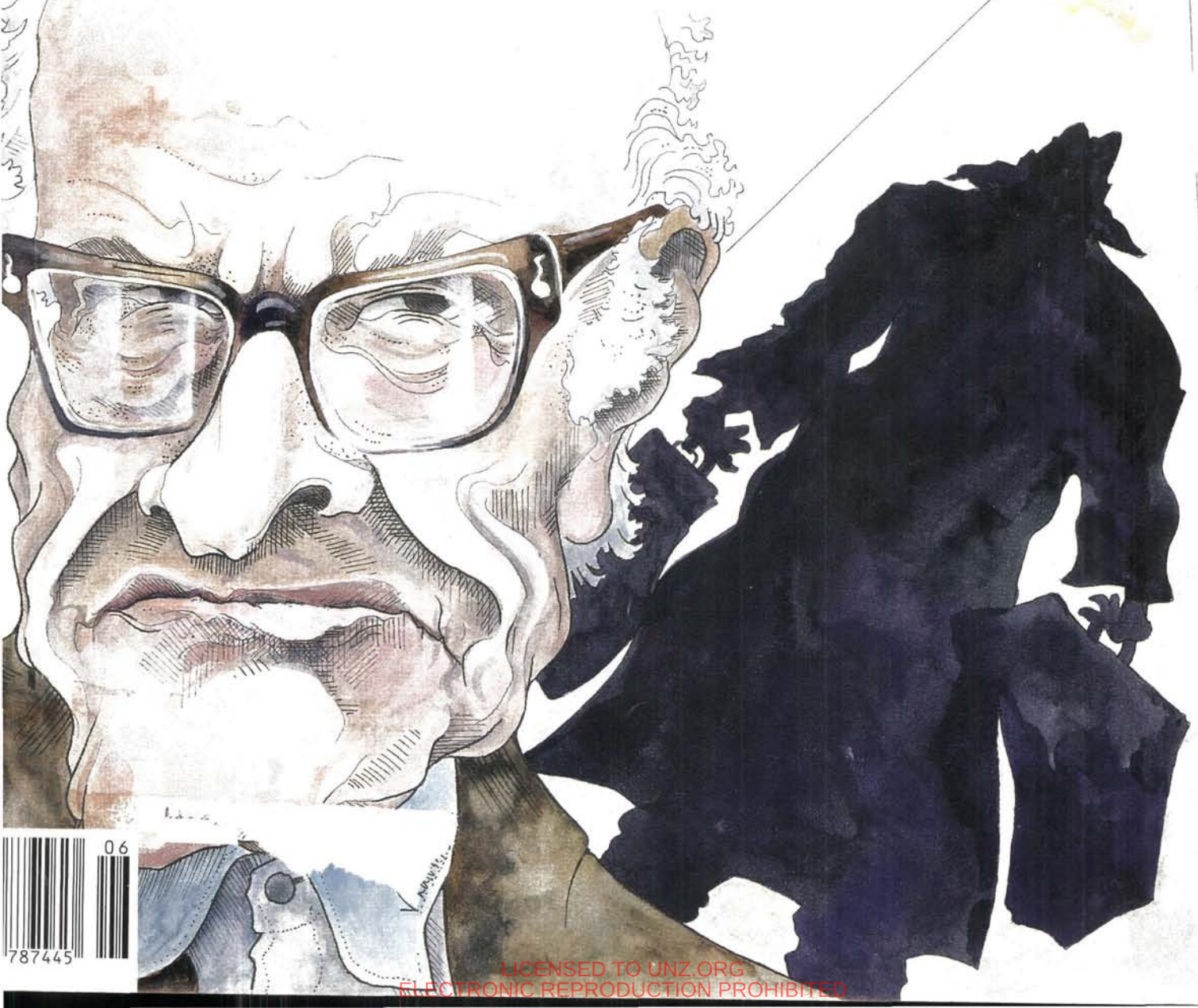
TIPPER GORE AND THE LIBERAL BLINDNESS

THE NEW REPUBLIC



Arthur Miller's Last Act

David Denby on the pretensions of an American playwright



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WALKING THE TRADE BALANCE TIGHTROPE.

America is walking a tightrope that stretches around the globe. The issue is international trade. And unless we can reestablish our balance and footing, we could face serious economic consequences. With an annual trade deficit that's rapidly approaching $200 billion, the situation is already serious.

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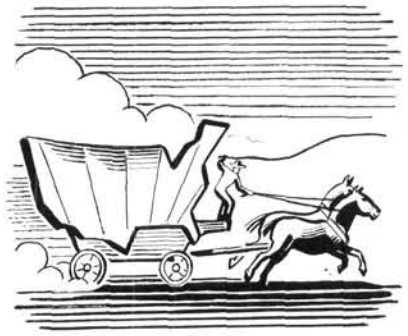
The strength of the dollar has also contributed to America's trade deficit. While the dollar has fallen recently against some foreign



currencies, the problem is that it has not fallen uniformly against all currencies. As a result, our trade imbalance simply shifts from one country to another.

The real problem, however, is that devaluing the dollar does nothing to address the fundamental issue. If America's cost of capital is too high, the solution must come from innovative financing techniques and more aggressive use of our balance sheet potential.

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

GOOD MORNING, AFGHANISTAN

TRB is on vacation. This column was written by Hendrik Hertzberg.

Hey, wait a minute—what if the Russians really *do* get out of Afghanistan?

It hasn't happened yet, but over the last few weeks there has been a lot of emphatic signaling that it will, beginning soon. On January 6, in Kabul, Eduard A. Shevardnadze, the Soviet foreign minister, gave an important interview to an unimportant organization, the official Afghan press agency, Bakhtar. (What a sad collection of doomed hacks that must be.) In the interview Shevardnadze said, "We would like the year 1988 to be the last year of the presence of Soviet troops in your country." An unexceptionable sentiment, only Shevardnadze seems to have meant it as more than a bland wish. It was more in the nature of a New Year's resolution, one that must have chilled his hosts. For he went on to say pointedly that while the Russians would like to see "a coalition government on the broadest possible basis" in Afghanistan, that is something for the Afghans to worry about.

Meanwhile, in New Delhi, Shevardnadze's deputy, Anatoly L. Adamishin, was telling Tass that "national reconciliation" of Afghan factions "is not connected" to the Soviet Union's plans for withdrawal. "National reconciliation" has been the Afghan government's big theme for about a year now. It is part of a frantic program of quick-change false mustaches under which the formerly militant Communists of the Kabul regime have been proclaiming themselves devout Muslims, have quit calling the guerrillas "bandits" and started calling them "opposing groups," and have changed the name of the country from the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan back to the Republic of Afghanistan. (Never mind, it wasn't that democratic anyway.) The resistance groups have shown no interest in "national reconciliation," and now the Soviets are growing impatient with it too, and with its promoters. Shevardnadze told the Bakhtar scribblers that anybody who puts "some transient, circumstantial, personal considerations and aspirations above the interests of the nation" had better watch out. This was universally taken to be a jab at Najibullah, the uninominal general secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, who has also been known at various times and in various contexts as Dr. Najibullah, Dr. Najib, Mohammad Najib, or just plain Najib. This fellow has more names than Gary Hart, though his political future is not as bright.

In a negotiating session scheduled for February in Geneva, a deal will probably be struck whereby the Soviet troops will start to withdraw and the United States, at the same time, will end its military aid to the guerrillas. (Not to worry, though; they are said to have five years' worth of supplies stored up.) A variety of stratagems would be employed to give the Soviets and their clients a decent interval of the sort considered desirable on these occasions. But the bottom line, perhaps a year from now, would be a total Soviet military retreat, followed in short order by the overthrow of whatever Afghan government the Russians have left behind.

That, at any rate, is what the Soviet leaders seem to be preparing themselves and their people for. Judging from that, and from what the Reagan administration, the Pakistanis, and the resistance fighters themselves have been saying, the chances of such an outcome have to be rated as considerably better than even. If the Russians do get out, and the remnants of Afghan communism are extirpated, then an awful lot of geopolitical computers are going to have to be reprogrammed.

One obvious casualty of the de-Sovietization of Afghanistan will be the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine, according to which, writes Richard Pipes in *Survival Is Not Enough*, "any country that has crossed the line separating 'feudalism' or 'capitalism' from communism must under no conditions revert to its previous status, whereas all non-Communist social and political systems are subject to change of ownership at all times." Reagan tweaked the doctrine's nose in Grenada, but it has been left to the *mujahideen* of Afghanistan to finish it off.

As a side effect, the Brezhnev Doctrine's collapse will probably damage the

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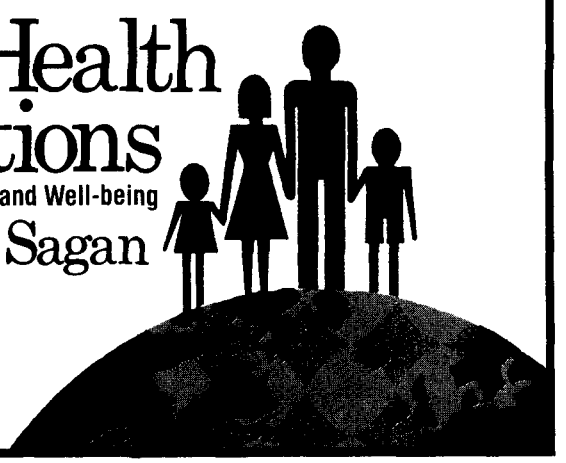

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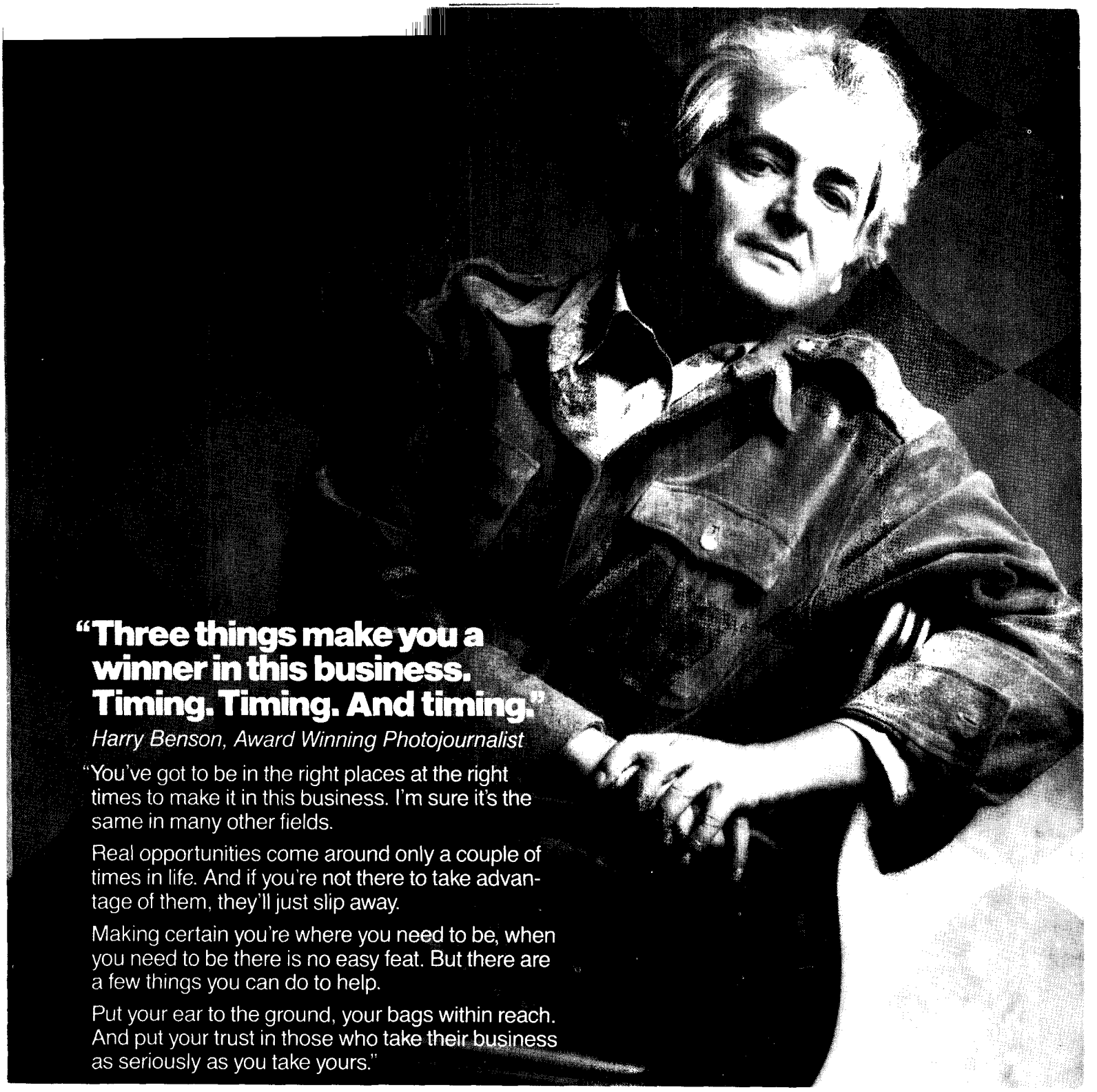

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CORRESPONDENCE

ARTIST AND INTERPRETER

To the editors:

Robert Hughes ("The Artist As Entrepreneur," December 14), in writing on Julian Schnabel, could have quoted the greatest art entrepreneur of all, Picasso. In an interview with *Libro Nero* in 1952, Picasso stated: "In art the mass of people no longer seeks consolation and exaltation, but those who are refined, rich, unoccupied, who are distillers of quintessences, seek what is new, strange, original, extravagant, scandalous. I myself, since Cubism and before, have satisfied these masters and critics with all the changing oddities which pass through my head, and the less they understood me, the more they admired me. . . . Fame for a painter means sales, gains, fortune, riches. And today, as you know, I am celebrated, I am rich. But when I am alone with myself, I have not the courage to think of myself as an artist in the great and ancient sense of the term. Giotto, Titian, Rembrandt were great painters. I am only a public entertainer who has understood his times and exploited as best he could the imbecility, the vanity, the cupidity of his contemporaries."

DAVID P. KOGAN
Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania

To the editors:

In his review of Julian Schnabel's *CVJ: Nicknames of Maitre D's & Other Excerpts from Life*, Robert Hughes asserts that he pressured Random House to remove a section of the manuscript that he found offensive. The material in question was in fact deleted long before anyone here received any advisory from Mr. Hughes. As is typical of virtually all manuscripts, numerous excisions and additions were made during the lengthy editorial process. That such changes were made under duress is simply not the case. It's unfortunate that Mr. Hughes draws such undue attention to material a book does not contain as opposed to what it does.

DAVID ROSENTHAL
Editor, Random House
New York, New York

COCKBURN EN GARDE

To the editors:

It is no disgrace to be vilified in your pages by someone ignorant enough to believe that Alcide de Gasperi was a social democrat, and it is an honor to be called a fifth columnist by THE NEW REPUBLIC. So I shall leave Henry Fairlie's ravings against me undisturbed ("The Fifth Columnist," December 28). But this indifference does not apply to his opening libel against my father, Claud, and I challenge him to state his source for the very specific allegation that my father fabricated his reports to the *Times* of London when he was that newspaper's correspondent in the United States.

ALEXANDER COCKBURN
New York, New York

Henry Fairlie replies:

Alexander Cockburn feigns indifference to my review, yet this is the third riposte, if one counts an interview in the *Boston Globe*, that he has so far proffered. In none of them has he made any effort to answer my criticism of his writing. No, de Gasperi was not a "social democrat"—my slip. My sources for saying that Claud Cockburn fabricated some stories—not all, of course—when he was correspondent for the *Times* of London in America are: his own frequent boasts in my company and that of other journalists that he had done so and got them in the *Times*; the confirmation of some British journalists who had been in America with him; and, during my own years on the *Times*, the fact that this was part of the lore of the office. I agree there is no written, conclusive evidence that my accusation is correct. But since Claud Cockburn admitted in print that he had fabricated stories from Spain during the Civil War, it is not surprising that one accepted his own word for the fact that he had done the same from America.

GEPHARDT'S SWITCH IN TIME

To the editors:

One test of how well leaders "grow" in office is whether they have the guts to change positions when they change their minds or when new circumstances warrant new solutions. Ronald Reagan changed his mind on arms control, Rob-

continued on page 42

The pathbreaking study of prison reform that *doesn't* sentence the system to failure.

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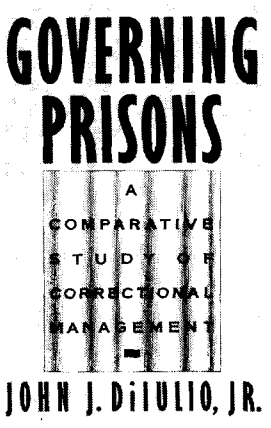

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
FEBRUARY 8, 1988

THE CULTURE OF APATHY

This is a time of crisis in the history of our culture, and liberals are alert to—even frantic about—some of its dimensions. They grasp the prospect of decline that lurks in the erosion of the values and reality of equality in America. They understand, even if Reaganites do not, that a large and ignored underclass weakens a nation. But a fog bank of insouciance envelops the liberal mind when other cultural aspects of our crisis, at least as palpable and almost as quantifiable, are placed on the social agenda.

What leaves them especially cold to the question of cultural decline is the way it challenges their own attachment to the endlessness of personal freedoms. It is not hard to understand why. Contemporary liberalism is so intellectually and psychologically invested in the doctrine of ever-expanding rights—the rights of privacy, the rights of children, the rights of criminals, the rights of pornographers, the rights of everyone to everything—that any suggestion of the baleful consequences of that doctrine appears to them as a threat to the liberal idea itself. The Moral Majoritarians in our midst intend precisely that threat. It need not, of course, come to that. But this will depend on whether liberals are brave enough to stop averting their eyes from a spectacle for which their ideology has no ready remedy.

The facts are clear. Licentiousness about drugs and sex have put our children at risk, and the most vulnerable of our children, minority and poor children, at greatest risk. The AIDS pandemic may be the most painful and most vivid symptom of that risk, but it is not the only symptom. Lives are ruined by the ethos of "anything goes" just as surely as they are lost. In this insidious culture of lassitude, no one is safe, and no place. The city is the most insecure, and the greater the city the least secure of all. The great historic cities, whatever their well-known tolerance for what we used to call "decadence," were centers of civilization—in the last two centuries especially, enhancing and enriching the lives of ordinary men and women. Our cities have not transformed themselves overnight into Sodom and Gomorrah, but they have fast become centers of barbarism. By barbarism we do not mean just crime, though growing violent and pointless crime has been an accurate index of the failures of urban schools to teach civilization, which is to say to socialize and to civilize.

By barbarism we mean the exacerbated cultural degradation of man and environment. One of the causes is the frustration of grinding poverty, particularly in the wake of both insincere promises and oafish efforts to end it. Since, however, this barbarism afflicts more than the lives of the poor, poverty cannot be its only cause. In any case, the poor can do without that callous form of ideological charity that would lift from their children the sentence of a wanton life only on the condition of their own entrance into the middle class. It was never the case in the past and it surely isn't the case now. What has degraded so many of the young poor and the young black has also degraded many other young people who are neither poor nor black nor without horizons. This is the sense, actively encouraged by our popular culture and propagated by the incessant images of our mass media, that nothing is true and everything is permitted.

"Nice girls do it," in the words of a hit song on black radio. Indeed, they do, as the grim statistics of female-headed poor families unmistakably demonstrate. And so will their daughters, unless and until the culture pervasively states a different message. In the meantime, this anthem or similar anthems are on radio stations across the country. And on everyone's television there is a Walpurgisnacht of value-neutral brutality. By the time your average child is 16, he will have been witness to some 16,000 murders on the tube. It may be difficult to certify cause and effect. But only the willfully blind will argue that there is no cumula-

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tive correlation between what we see and what we are. What we are calling for, then, is not a return to Victorian standards of hypocrisy, or censorship, or even repression. Merely the hard-earned recognition that throughout society there is a need for standards of restraint, of measure, even of shame. The ridicule of the emotion of shame in recent times—its association with immaturity, guilt, insecurity, and all the other catchwords of psychoanalysis—has, for all its self-serving appeal, masked an essential truth. Where there is little sense of shame there can, in fact, be little sense of dignity.

The idea of proportion and propriety that once bounded private and public life will not be restored either by legislation or by exhortation. And we certainly do not propose a restoration of the bland irrelevance of the "Leave It to Beaver" culture to the minds and lives of Americans. Still, there is something we do need to recover from the world we have lost, even if we do not want to return to its narrow confines. For now, it would be a big step forward if we were to become aware of the costs, real and emotional, of living without and beyond boundaries. And for that we need at least to talk.

But the issue of cultural degeneration has become taboo among liberals, provoking *bien pensant* rancor almost as nothing else does. Simply for raising the issue Tipper Gore has not been safe from ridicule. Mention her name in some circles on both coasts, and you are greeted with a curious mixture of boredom and alarm. A few minutes into the conversation, someone will knowingly whisper "censorship," the falsehood disguised as argument. It is hard to avoid the impression, moreover, that her detractors, even when they are men of advanced opinions, are patronizing her because she is a woman. It is why they call her "Tipper" and her effort a "crusade." Campaigns launched by women often attract that derisive label. Aren't women and crusades both, after all, emotional? When 50 years ago Eleanor Roosevelt began to agitate in Washington for racial equality, a cause then widely thought to be favored also primarily by cranks, savvy commentators made it clear that even liberal women should stick to their pastel and mauve responsibilities. The secretary of war, Henry L. Stimson, attacked her "intrusive and impulsive folly." As with the slanders against Tipper Gore, the most brazen fear-mongering was believed by otherwise skeptical people. Many were convinced that Mrs. Roosevelt was actually intent on fomenting insurrection among Negro domestics, at least for starters. And her husband's well-wishers worried that, by her independence, she was somehow undermining FDR's aura of command. In this regard we have not changed all that much. Only a few weeks ago, a valued TNR writer of very advanced opinions on just about everything (and hell, why not?) warned that Mrs. Gore was "unmanning" her husband.

Mrs. Gore co-founded the Parents' Music Resource Center, which, through old-fashioned First Amendment pressure from a concerned public, persuaded the umbrella organization of the recording industry to affix "parental advisory" labels to albums with "explicit lyrics." In the end, this is no big deal. It may even be somewhat counterproductive, enticing young people to really foul lyrics they might otherwise have ignored. But no one at PMRC, least of all Mrs. Gore, believes that labeling a dozen or so record sleeves each year will retard the wantonness of American life. Everybody is aware, moreover, that, where there are no proper parents or where the culture has already so sabotaged parental authority, "parental advisory" labels are hardly effective antidotes to violence and pornography. But this is only a reflection of how deep the problem is—and a measure of how urgent is the national conversation to which Tipper Gore has summoned us.

In these pages Mrs. Gore was recently stigmatized as a prude because out of "all the thousands of causes in the world, she has chosen this one." Well, it is not her only cause. She is the founding chair of Families for the Homeless, a national mobilization aimed at retrieving children (and their parents) from another manifestation of America's stoneheartedness. But what is so wrong with also making as one's cause the protection of children from the numbing norms in our culture of random drugs, random sex, and random violence? Is it only conservatives who are to worry about whether wholesomeness will survive the 20th century?

With the triumph of sensate values, wrote the visionary sociologist Pitirim Sorokin, our society will become a "dumping place" for children. The callousness about the homeless should be seen as at once an expression of this reality and an ominous auguring. But so also should the callousness that relentlessly inflicts on our children so nasty a culture with so debased a vision of human flourishing. How strange it is that modern interventionist liberals would leave the determination of all this to a rapacious market. No one is calling here for government intercession or any form of censorship. But it is time for more public scrutiny and for more public debate. And if Mrs. Gore is still willing to endure the taunts of fashionable opinion and argue the subtle truth that it really is wise restraints that make us genuinely free, then we will be very much in her debt.

NOTEBOOK

□ YOU SAID IT: "We have spent 5,000 years as a race of human beings trying to drag ourselves out of the primeval slime by searching for truth and moral absolutes. In the place of truth we have discovered facts; for moral absolutes, we have substituted moral ambiguity. We now communicate with everybody and say absolutely nothing." —Ted Koppel, "Nightline" host, address to Duke University, May 10, 1987.

□ THE ODDS ON JIMMY: It's almost tautological to say that the public career of Jimmy the Greek, oddsmaker, was based on ethnic stereotyping. Until last weekend, nobody was upset by this. Then, in an impromptu television inter-

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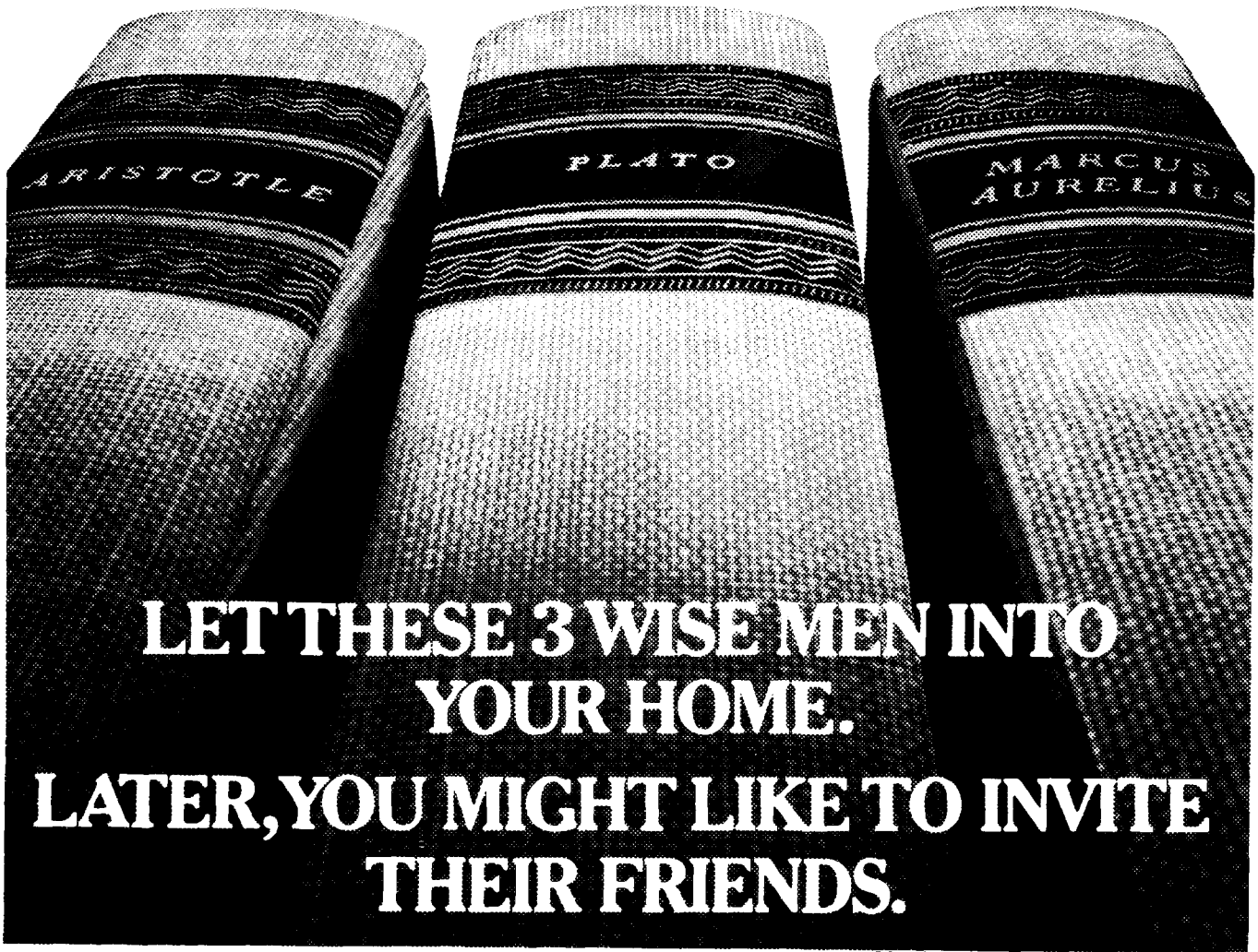

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view, Jimmy went in for some stereotyping of his own. He openly mused about the superiority of blacks in sports, a result, he said, of their longer and more powerful body structures. Trouble is, he's partly right on this. Twenty-five percent of black men are above six feet tall; only ten percent of white men are. This does help explain the disproportionate presence of blacks on pro football and basketball teams. Where Jimmy went off was in his facile explanation. He put it all on white slaveholders who, before the Civil War, he said, bred slaves for size. There's no evidence, say both C. Vann Woodward, our most distinguished historian of the South, and Robert Fogel, the path-breaking quantitative historian of the slavery economy, that this is true (although slaves were bred on some farms for numbers). Jimmy's real offense was not bad history, but his worrying aloud about where in sports there would be room for whites if coaches' jobs weren't reserved for them. Triumphing over decades of bigotry, blacks have finally made it big in sports, a surrender of the athletic establishments to meritocracy. So Jimmy's set-aside for whites in coaching is, in fact, a grotesque parody of the excessive demands by some minorities for anti-meritocratic quotas in some areas of national life. Were there a genuine meritocracy in football, blacks would be disproportionately represented on the field and fairly represented in management. But all this public discussion was too much for CBS, and on the weekend of Martin Luther King Day, otherwise zealous First Amendment defenders all over the nation celebrated the sacking of Jimmy the Greek.

□ PREDICTIONS: "I know what you're thinking. How trendy

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart
1.	BLOODY KANSAN	2	27
2.	COUNCIL FLUFFS	*	7
3.	BRED IN THE BONEHEAD	*	3
4.	BANANA REPUBLICANS	*	11
5.	TRADE-OFF AND ON	4	12
6.	PAPER LOSSES	—	1
7.	THE SPACE MERCHANTS	*	3
8.	KHYBER PAST	*	2
9.	NOSTALGIE DE LA BOOM	—	1
10.	I GOT NEW BABE	—	1

Republicans. The Dole Malice Watch is on. Without him saying anything particular, Dole's offensive against Bush has brought the ever-present question of his meanness to the foreground. This touchy-feely aspect to the presidency is now close to dominant; certainly "likableness" overshadows the fading issue of competence. It's what keeps Reagan buoyant.

Democrats. The Democrats' full-house debate should have been a turning point in their race, but the train blew right through the station with nobody taking the throttle. Hart disappeared into the wallpaper, Dukakis failed to dent Simon, and Babbitt failed to build on his friendly press. Only Jackson showed oratorical skill, but that is hardly a route toward defining this amorphous and lumbering field.

Sports racism. Jimmy the Greek can always get work as Evan Mecham's press secretary, but the real damage he leaves behind is that millions who never before heard the breeding canard will now add it to their store of poisonous racial falsehoods. There must always be an external explanation for the success of despised groups, even when they are powerless.

Nicaragua. The *contra* story is closing as farce; only Ortega's staggering diplomatic incompetence is keeping it alive at all. Congress will take any excuse to end *contra* aid. That Ortega has to be bullied into playing a game of now-you-see-democracy, now-you-don't with Congress is foolish enough. That the bullying is being done by such paragons of democracy as the other Central Americans (pace Arias) makes it a spectacle.

Economy. The more popular a story the economy becomes, the more simpleminded its presentation. Trade figures are improved, but how much is attributable to the supine dollar, how much to seasonal factors? Meanwhile, there's a new wrinkle to the Everything's OK angle: because U.S. purchasing fuels a global economy, the U.S. trade imbalance is ipso facto meaningless.

School censorship. The lesson the Supreme Court taught Hazelwood High's student reporters sounds an awful lot like A. J. Liebling's Journalism In One Lesson, that freedom of the press belongs to the guy who owns one. Hazelwood's reporters got spiked. If that has meant a high school retreat from too-close-to-home controversies, it is an accurate reflection of much professional newspapering. But the coverage of the Hazelwood story stayed away from *that*.

Space. NASA's problems have suddenly opened the door to the future that American science fiction foresaw: an entrepreneurial, frontier-minded, Heinleinesque outer space. Indeed, the proposed private space station is being welcomed as if it were the rescuing cavalry. There is an s.f. flip side to this future too: Frederik Pohl's exploited, vulgarized space. But then these futures are less in the stars than in ourselves.

Afghanistan. If you've concluded from recent Afghanistan commentary that the Soviets are out and the war's over, it's understandable. The focus has become postwar. We've seen such premature, it's-all-over-but-the-shooting coverage before, notably in Vietnam. Its effect is not to hasten a war's end, but to take pressure off the party prosecuting the war.

1968. Not only did *Time* devote an issue to the chaos of 20 years ago, so did Britain's *New Statesman*. In France the very numbers on a page or a wall have long been a political statement. There's a New York exhibit on 1968, and people are saying silly things like American Innocence died that year. More interesting is the sense that 1988 is being measured, perhaps disapprovingly, against the passions of 1968.

Cher. Cher's self-transformation from yesterday's rock singer to respected actress *and* box-office attraction is a study in celebrity manipulation. She maintained a low-end presence with her sexy gym ads, while gaining high-end attention—at first as a curiosity—in art films like *Jimmy Dean*. If she wasn't any good, it wouldn't have worked. But this is still a unique balancing act, and it has landed her back in the mainstream.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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can they get? There she goes, flaunting her lifestyle. Always one step ahead of the crowd.

"This is true. Let me add another tidbit. We wore sweatclothes for our New Year's Eve celebration. Yes, yes, call us slaves of fashion. Mine were olive green. My husband's were gray." —Ellen Goodman, *Washington Post*, January 2, written to deadline Wednesday, December 30, a day before the events took place.

(thanks to Daniel Lazare, New York, New York)

Oh, no! It's budget '88.

PORK QUIZ

YOU MAY HAVE heard about the big villains of the $604 billion budget passed by Congress just before Christmas last year. Senator Daniel Inouye snuck in an $8 million gift to benefit 3,000 of his favorite French Jews. House Speaker Jim Wright set aside $25 million for an unnecessary airport in his home district. But how well do you really know the most important document passed by Congress in the last year?

Chances are, not very. The reason, of course, is that by the time the budget gets passed, three months after it has gone into effect, it's virtually incomprehensible—like an epic poem composed in Haigspeak. Who among us can make the career decision to sit down and read through the 1,194-page Continuing Resolution, not to mention the 1,033-page, $17.6 billion deficit reduction package?

But it is our citizenly duty to know what fun our government is having at our expense. The following mini-budget quiz was prepared after weeks of drowsy nights poring over the document. It freely mixes real and imaginary appropriations, entitlements, and taxes. Your challenge is to separate the pork from the chaff. (Answer key on page 12.)

1. Which is *not* an agricultural appropriation that benefits North Dakota, home state of Senator Quentin Burdick, chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee?

a) $75,000 for dry bean research.

b) $69,000 for biological control of grasshoppers.

c) $500,000 reserved for scholars at the University of North Dakota to study the impact in the Soviet Union of the 1986 nuclear accident at Chernobyl.

d) $1.5 million to knock down the border with South Dakota and merge the two states.

2. True or false?

The author of the Boland amendment, Representative Edward Boland of Massachusetts, was one of two congressional sponsors to award $260,000 to the Center for Cranberry and Blueberry Research.

3. Which *is* provided for in either the spending bill or the deficit-reduction package?

a) $6.4 million to build a Bavarian-style ski resort in Kellogg, Idaho.

b) Tax breaks totaling $100 million for the Tyson and Purdue families, leading chicken producers.

c) $10 million to buy surplus sunflower oil.

d) All of the above.

4. Which *is* included in the budget as an agricultural research grant?

a) $100,000 to determine the color of a red rose.

b) $1 million to remove the gnats from House Speaker Wright's tomato crop.

c) $60,000 for a Belgian Endive Research Center at the University of Massachusetts—Amherst, courtesy of Massachusetts Republican Representative Silvio O. Conte.

d) $2 million to determine the hypothetical amount of wood that a woodchuck would be able to chuck, if a woodchuck could chuck wood.

5. True or false?

Speaker Wright referred to people who criticized his airport, and the $280,000 he set aside for a new "civic achievement award program," as "Fussbudgets."

6. Which is *not* on the list of international projects that receive funds in the State Department's budget?

a) $224,000 for the World Tourism Organization.

b) $61,000 for the Maintenance of Certain Lights in the Red Sea.

c) $55,000 for the International Office for Epizootics.

d) $100,000 for the International House of Pancakes.

7. Complete the remark made by Democratic Representative Robert J. Mrazek about the provision giving $8.1 million to the Nicaraguan *contras*. "We took a pig and dressed it up in _____, but it's still a pig."

a) a blanket

b) barbecue sauce

c) a tuxedo

d) a yarmulke

8. Which is *not* an example of pork secured for Mississippi by either Democratic Representative Jamie Whitten, House Appropriations Committee chairman, or Democratic Senator John Stennis, of the Senate Appropriations Committee?

a) A grant of $3 million to the Institute of Technology Development in Jackson, Mississippi.

b) $500,000 for the University of Mississippi to develop sonar catfish counters.

c) A grant of $175,000 to the William Faulkner Drinkin' 'n' Huntin' Club at the University of Mississippi at Oxford.

d) $3.7 million to the University of Southern Mississippi for the Polymer Institute.

9. True or false?

In addition to his efforts on behalf of French Jews, Senator Daniel Inouye was behind a $250,000 appropriation for pig and exotic plant control in Hawaii, thus effectively serving pork to pigs.

10. What did President Reagan say when he signed the final version of the budget into law on December 22?

a) "Wrapping up the entire legislative business of our country into two 1,000-page bills on the eve of Christmas is not the way to do business."

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b) "Wrapping up this big budget on the eve of Christmas *is a wonderful gift we are making to the country.*"

c) "It's been nice rapping with you, now I've got business to do."

d) "Well, I'll just put my John Hancock on the line here and that'll be a wrap."

Answers: 1) d; 2) True; 3) d; 4) c; 5) False; 6) d; 7) c; 8) c; 9) True; 10) a

ARI Z. POSNER

CAMPAIGN '88

THE SPRINT

TIMING ISN'T EVERYTHING in politics, but it goes for a lot in the Democratic presidential race. "Organize early, get hot late," says Representative David Nagle of Iowa, a former state Democratic chairman. The first part is easy. Five of the seven Democratic candidates—the exceptions are Gary Hart and Albert Gore—are extraordinarily well-organized for the Iowa caucuses on February 8 and the New Hampshire primary eight days later. It's tougher to get hot just as the election cycle begins. Every campaign plans for a late surge. Few achieve it. Luck, unforeseen events, and the press play a big role.

By mid-January in 1984, Hart was on a roll in Iowa. Both his stump speeches and his television ads, produced by Raymond Strother, started clicking. This year, three weeks before the voting in Iowa, the hot candidates are Representative Richard Gephardt of Missouri and, to a lesser extent, former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt. As recently as December, both were written off, just as Hart had been in 1984.

How do we know these two guys are hot? Well, there are polls that say so, at least in Gephardt's case. A mid-January poll in Iowa by WBZ-TV of Boston put him in first place (19 percent), ahead of Hart (16 percent), Senator Paul Simon of Illinois (15 percent), and Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis (13 percent). Babbitt got only five percent in the poll, but he's gotten such slavishly favorable press coverage that he's bound to rise. Besides, there's another test: Whom are the other candidates attacking now? Yep, Gephardt and Babbitt.

Gephardt has come full circle. Last spring, when Hart was the front-runner, Gephardt was his chief challenger. That was Phase One of the campaign. Then Hart dropped out, and Phase Two began. Dukakis, who gained a good chunk of Hart's support in Iowa and elsewhere, surged. But Dukakis stumbled in October, when his aides leaked the "attack video" exposing Joe Biden's plagiarism. That led to Phase Three, in which Simon, who wears his integrity on his sleeve, stepped forward. Phase Four came in December, when Hart got back into the race. It's the one *we're in now.*

The Hart re-entry stopped Simon in his tracks. It had the effect of starting the race all over again, with voters forced to take a fresh look at the candidates. Gephardt was ready. Over the fall, he had taken his lumps, especially over his support for protectionism (his euphemism is "promotionism"). In the Iowa Poll of the *Des Moines Register*, he dipped from 24 percent to six percent. His press secretary, Don Foley, quit. His campaign ran into money trouble, and six staffers weren't paid for three weeks. Finally, in what seemed a desperate move, he threw virtually his entire campaign team into Iowa. Actually, he had nothing to lose. Iowa is everything. It's fine to be organized in other states, but if you do poorly in Iowa, you'll be out of the race. None of the candidates, except Gore, has a strong organization anywhere but Iowa, New Hampshire, and their home states.

Gephardt is viewed by the other candidates and the press as a crass opportunist. Perhaps, but there's consistency in his approach to the campaign. One by one, he's taken on the front-runner. He challenged Hart on trade, then debated Dukakis on the same subject. At the nationally televised NBC debate in December, he went after Simon on the deficit. Gephardt also stuck with the trade issue. Smartest of all, he didn't reverse his decision to hold his TV ads off the air until after Christmas. "There was a lot of second-guessing and handwringing over that," says William Carrick, Gephardt's campaign manager. As luck would have it, Hart's return to the race made all the TV ads other candidates had put on—both Simon and Dukakis ran spots during the fall—irrelevant.

A one-minute commercial on trade has helped Gephardt the most. It defends the Gephardt amendment on trade and points to a specific, memorable example of what the measure is aimed at, the fact that a $10,000 Chrysler K car costs $48,000 in South Korea. Gephardt has added populist rhetoric, denouncing the *Wall Street Journal* and "the establishment" in a debate in Des Moines on January 15.

IN WHAT HAS become his regular pose, Babbitt played Diogenes in the Iowa debate. He presented himself as the only "honest" candidate because he's willing to advocate unpopular measures to cut the deficit, such as a five percent national sales tax and full taxation of Social Security and Medicare for "the upper 20 percent of high-income Americans." This works wonders with the press. Babbitt aides can recite, verbatim, press puffery about him, like this from *Time*: "If Babbitt advances, it will mark a triumph of ideas over images, of candor over pandering." (On the other hand, *Newsweek* called Gephardt the "pandering populist.") TNR called Babbitt a "stand-up guy."

Does the adulation of reporters matter? It can't hurt. A favorable press, combined with a string of impressive debate performances, has driven up Babbitt's "internals" in polls. That means he's viewed far more favorably. The theory goes that favorability is a leading indicator, and that voter preference will follow. Maybe. In any case, Babbitt has to surmount what Greg Schneiders, his pollster, calls

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"the can't-win problem." In a closing statement at the Iowa debate, Babbitt told voters to ignore the current polls. A few days later, he aired an ad showing a mock TV report on a Babbitt victory in Iowa. Should this strike voters as credible, Babbitt has a shot at finishing in the top three.

Simon's trouble began with the NBC debate in December. He knew he'd be asked to square his new spending proposals with his promise to balance the budget in three years. But when anchorman Tom Brokaw asked exactly that, his answer was unspecific and lame. Gephardt made it worse by saying "Simonomics" is "Reaganomics with a bow tie." The Simon camp had, in fact, drafted a budget plan, but it was still being argued over. Too bad. Before Simon could release it, Hart was back and hogging all the press attention. So it wasn't until early January, a month later, that Simon released the plan. Even then, he tried to have it both ways, big spending and taxes only as a "last resort." He'd have been better off saying: I want a balanced budget, but jobs for all Americans, education, the environment, etc., are a higher priority. Simon is stalled, but still should finish first, second, or third in Iowa.

Dukakis could drop as low as fourth. He's static in the polls. Rarely has there been a candidate as steady and disciplined and even-tempered as Dukakis. He's forceful in debates. But he hasn't worn well. He's dull on the stump and comes off as bloodless. Dukakis also lacks a message, an issue. Gephardt, Simon, and Babbitt all have one. He's the George Bush of the Democratic race. His résumé is his message: I am the beef. In the Des Moines debate, he touched on the same themes he's been using for months. He'll bring "fiscal responsibility" and "economic growth" and "investment in people and technology." These are great general election themes, perfect when a Democrat is trying to prove he's for more than taxing and spending. But they aren't cutting much for Dukakis in Iowa.

THE DES MOINES debate marked Hart's first appearance in a joint setting. He should have stayed away. He looked distracted and gun-shy and like he's aged ten years. Perhaps he expected the other candidates to jump him. When they didn't, he rambled on about "immorality" and how others whose personal lives were "imperfect" had been great leaders. "He left the race because he believed adultery disqualified him," says Robert Squier, a Democratic consultant. "Now, in the debate, he believes adultery is a qualification." Still, he hovers around 20 percent in polls. He's expected to sink, particularly because his supporters, mostly males, aren't likely to vote. "Every political instinct I have tells me that Gary's caucus vote will be nowhere near 20 percent," says Mark Siegel, a Democratic National Committee member.

Neither Jesse Jackson nor Al Gore is a factor in Iowa, but they may be long-distance runners in the campaign. Jackson is achieving his aim of softening white opposition to him. He's kept his Iowa support around ten percent, and it's mostly white. "People make a mistake to think Jackson just has support in the black community," says pollster Peter Hart, who thinks Jackson can get ten percent of the white vote in Southern states. Gore's strategy of skipping Iowa and New Hampshire and making a strong showing on March 8, Super Tuesday, when there are 17 primaries in Southern and border states, may yet be vindicated. He's been combative in debates, zinging both Gephardt and Babbitt, two candidates he'd like to see die in Iowa or New Hampshire.

Gore is playing the scenario game, and one scenario is as credible as another in the Democratic race. If two Northern liberals, Dukakis and Simon, emerge as the front-runners, Gore would be delighted. He figures he can beat either, and Jackson, in most states on Super Tuesday. That would make Gore a real contender. Should the more moderate Gephardt emerge, however, the game is different. Gephardt is supported by 35 members of Congress from Super Tuesday states, Gore by only one outside Tennessee. Small wonder that Gore has targeted Gephardt (and Babbitt) in debates.

Of the many scenarios, I think three are more intriguing than the others. The first has Gephardt winning in Iowa, finishing off Simon, and taking on Dukakis in New Hampshire. If Gephardt wins there, he's on his way. But if Dukakis recovers strongly in New Hampshire, he'll stay alive, muddying the race. (Of course, if Dukakis wins Iowa, he's all but won the nomination.) The second has Simon winning Iowa, finishing off Gephardt, and taking on Dukakis back east. This would redound to Gore's benefit on Super Tuesday. The third has Babbitt winning Iowa and becoming front-runner. This is hard to imagine, but stranger things have happened. What matters most, after all, is being hot at the right time.

FRED BARNES

CAMPAIGN '88

BATTLESHIP BUSH

Hanover, New Hampshire

George Bush won the Iowa Republican debate on January 8 by beating up on the editor of the *Des Moines Register* for its coverage of Iranamok. In the process, he inspired conservatives at a focus group in Mason City to chant "Red Star! Red Star!" in defiance of the paper's liberalism and influence in the state. But he flubbed here in New Hampshire on January 16. He seemed not to know that the INF treaty doesn't require the Soviets to destroy SS-20 nuclear warheads, only missile launchers. He tried to duplicate his success in Des Moines by alleging that "the media have a fascination" with Iran, but then claimed (to boos from the audience) that the American people weren't interested in the scandal and that to raise the issue would only "tear down the president and tear down the party" and help the Democrats. In a possibly true statement, but an impoli-

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tic one, he said he still thinks there may be moderates to negotiate with in Iran. And he blurted out, "Voodoo economics . . . that's the only memorable thing I ever said."

By far the most vivid personality in the New Hampshire debate was that of Bush's archrival for the nomination, Senator Bob Dole, who (after seeming colorless in previous debates) let loose his caustic wit even to the point of exposing his legendary dark side. Dole got testy over the fact that Bush aides had distributed a Kansas newspaper article questioning the management of his wife's finances, jibed at former Delaware Governor Pete du Pont for his liberal voting record as a congressman, and attacked Bush for claiming credit in campaign literature for having preserved the solvency of the Social Security system. "I don't remember George Bush being in the loop on that. He wasn't at a single meeting," Dole said.

It was not Bush's day, but he survived it, and this was in keeping with his entire effort to succeed President Reagan. Bush modeled his vice presidency after Walter Mondale's, and is modeling his presidential campaign on Mondale's as well. Built like a battleship, it is big, heavy, and stable, made to take hits and sail on. Bush vastly outstrips his opponents in money, manpower, organizational depth, and establishment endorsements. But he has the same weakness that Mondale did—his support is wide, but not deep—and he is similarly vulnerable to surprise attack. But much as the Mondale boat got to port—albeit, badly damaged—Bush's boat seems headed there too.

Rival candidates Pat Robertson and Jack Kemp thought they could deliver a stunning blow to Bush in Michigan, technically the first event of the 1988 campaign, by seizing control of the state party machinery and packing precinct caucuses. In court, Bush lawyers neutralized Kemp-Robertson organizational control. On January 14 his supporters prevented a loss at the precinct level, and they figure to carry the official delegate-selecting state convention on January 30, although a rival delegation probably will challenge the credentials of the Bush delegation. Bush is helped by a split between Robertson and Kemp over tough-guy tactics used by Robertson followers in locking dissidents out of one Detroit caucus. Bush aides also note that Dole, supposedly a national candidate, was unable even to mount a campaign in Michigan.

IN IOWA, though, the real first contest of 1988, Bush supporters acknowledge that they are behind and that the *Des Moines Register* poll—showing Dole at 41 percent, Bush at 26, Robertson at 11, and Kemp at eight—is probably as accurate a measure of likely support as can be had in a caucus state. Other polls tend to put Robertson in single digits behind Kemp, but the Bush people think that understates the power of the evangelical movement to generate caucus attendees on a winter night. According to Bush political director Rich Bond, the architect of Bush's 1980 Iowa caucus victory over Ronald Reagan, between 100,000 and 160,000 voters will turn out on February 8. "The higher it goes, the higher the chances of Robertson's winning," he said. "There's a three, four, or five in ten chance that Robertson could win the Iowa caucuses."

At the moment, though, the polls and conventional political wisdom indicate that Dole, a Kansan, will win in Iowa on the strength of regional affinity, his consistent backing of farm subsidies, unhappiness with administration farm and foreign policies, and effective ads that celebrate his gritty rise from rural poverty and end with the slogan, "He's one of us." In a state where organization counts most, Dole has a good one, based on the statewide base of Senator Charles Grassley and led by a Grassley associate, Tom Synhorst. But so does Bush—to the point where John Buckley, press secretary to Jack Kemp, says, "I've been to Iowa 60 times in the last year, and I've seen lots of people with Dole buttons on, but no precinct captains. I've seen lots of Bush buttons too, and lots of captains. Dole's personal popularity just doesn't translate into the kind of organizational strength that can beat Rich Bond. I'd say that's worth ten points to Bush. If the polls show Dole ahead by 15 before the caucuses, Dole will win. If it's eight, Bush can win in Iowa."

THAT'S PARTLY wishful thinking. The Kemp forces hope that Bush will beat Dole in Iowa, virtually ending his campaign. Then Kemp can fill the role of top challenger to Bush in New Hampshire and the South. One other, less plausible, scenario also appeals to the Kemp people: that Dole clobbers Bush in Iowa so badly that Bush is badly weakened nationally and Kemp becomes Dole's major challenger in New Hampshire. Kemp thus hopes to become the Gary Hart of 1988, with either Bush or Dole in the Mondale role. Kemp aides note that in 1984, Hart showed up in single digits in New Hampshire polls (while John Glenn had 25 percent) prior to finishing in third place, with 16 percent, in Iowa. After Glenn bombed out in Iowa, Hart beat Mondale in New Hampshire and nearly won the nomination.

Kemp has precious little to sustain these hopes. He says he is aiming for a "strong fourth" in Iowa. In New Hampshire, though, he jumped in the polls from ten percent to 15 percent with hard-hitting ads depicting Dole and Bush as favoring tax increases. More ads are on tap alleging that Dole and Bush favor higher oil prices, not popular in a state where winter lasts six months, and that both want to cut Social Security cost-of-living increases in order to narrow the budget deficit. Kemp aides claim that Dole cannot possibly climb above 25 percent, given his reputation as a "taxer" in anti-tax New Hampshire, and that Bush's support (currently 38 percent) contains thousands of conservatives who are attracted to Bush only because of his association with Ronald Reagan.

Still, this association is an asset that Dole and Kemp can't count on. Both have an ambiguous relationship to Reagan. Dole is rhetorically and legislatively supportive, but critical on Iranamok and the deficit. Kemp often attacks Reagan from the right. Dole has cachet among Democrats, and probably would be the strongest general-election candidate. But among Republicans, Reagan is still overwhelmingly popular, and this is one basis of Bush's

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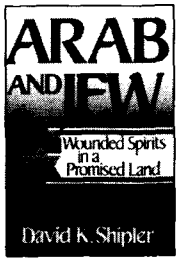

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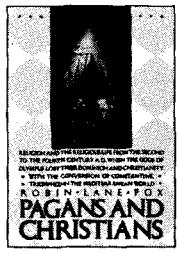

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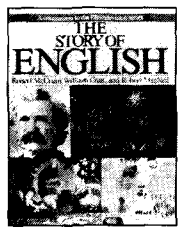

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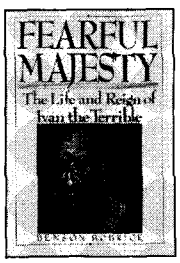

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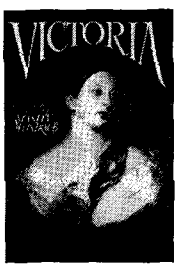

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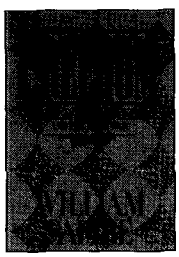

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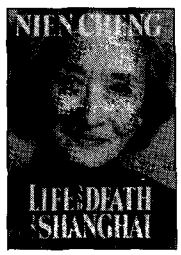

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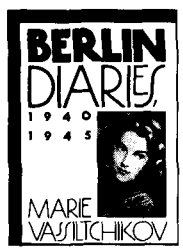

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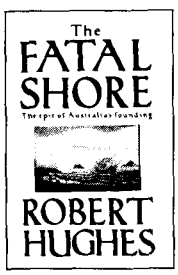

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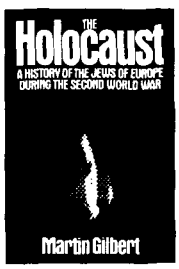

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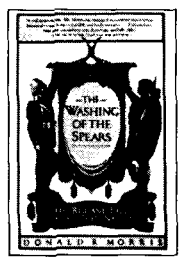

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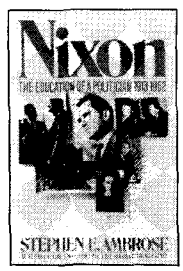

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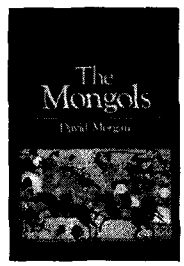

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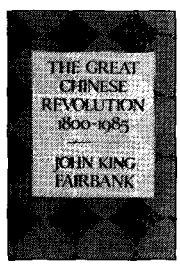

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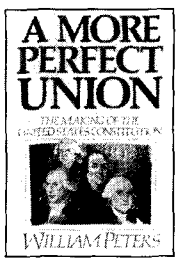

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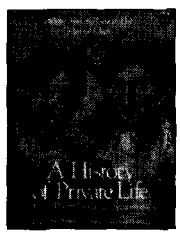

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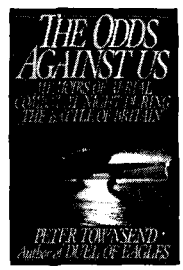

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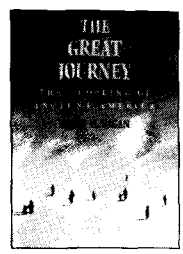

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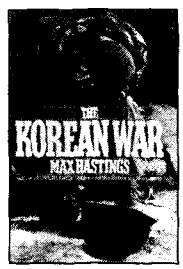

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front-runner status in New Hampshire and nationally.

Another is organization. In New Hampshire, Bush has a chairman for every one of the state's 299 precincts; Dole has less than half that number. Bush has help from Governor John Sununu, an organizational politician. Dole has Senator Warren Rudman backing him, but Rudman's political strength lies in use of the Boston media market rather than organization. Kemp is backed by Senator Gordon Humphrey, but the right wing is split, with evangelicals backing Robertson and the *Manchester Union-Leader* endorsing du Pont. The Bush organization is calling more than 1,000 voters per day, hoping to identify 40,000 to 50,000 favorable voters to turn out on election day.

To counter Bush, the Dole campaign has to hope for a big win in Iowa that will shake Bush's New Hampshire support. A Dole victory in New Hampshire might set a Hart-like tsunami going on Super Tuesday that could sink even a battleship. But, at the moment, the likeliest prospect is for Dole to win Iowa only comfortably and for Bush to win New Hampshire. In the South on Super Tuesday, even Dole's top managers admit, Bush is far ahead. "The Bush lead in the South is so enormous," said campaign manager Bill Brock, "that we've got to come in with a lot of early wins to have some chance. They [Bush backers] view the South as their inviolable structure, their fortress."

INDEED, the South does look as though it belongs to Bush. Late polls show Bush with a 57-12 lead over Dole in Texas, 42-26 in Florida, 43-17 in Georgia, 41-24 in Kentucky, 57-20 in South Carolina, 45-24 in Alabama, 42-20 in Louisiana, 40-19 in Mississippi, and 44-24 in Virginia. According to Brock, Dole's best shots are in Oklahoma, Missouri (where Dole leads 40-25), North Carolina (home state of Dole's wife, Elizabeth), Kentucky, and Tennessee. Almost everywhere Dole is organizationally far behind Bush, who has been cultivating politicians down to the state legislator level for seven years. Dole did not have Brock on board as a full-time campaign manager until late last year, and Brock found that the campaign had no record of its expenditures or even a rundown on Dole's Senate voting record. Position papers on most issues have yet to be released. The campaign was forced to hire workers to collect petitions in Texas. It is in danger of losing Hawaii's caucuses to Robertson. And in New York it was able to file candidates in only 14 of the state's 34 delegate races even though Dole has the backing of Senator Alfonse D'Amato.

Dole tried to bypass political trench warfare with a strategic strike at Bush in January. He raised questions about Bush's leadership ability in hopes of pushing him into some massive gaffe. Bush, however, did not lose his composure, and struck back with questions that led Dole to fire his campaign finance chairman and begin muttering about dirty tricks. Bush also seems to have escaped from the press's pursuit on Iranamok. So the ship stays afloat and all enemies remain at bay. But of course what's happened so far is phony war. The real battles start about now.

MORTON M. KONDRACKE

POSTCARD HAITI

GETTING TO KNOW THE GENERAL

Port-au-Prince

You would not know from Gen. Claude Raymond's cordial welcome that he is one of the most dangerous personalities in Haiti. The general is a handsome, muscular man who looks younger than his 57 years, and whose political vocabulary is salted with standard Third World platitudes about economic development, democracy, and peace. It is only when you press him hard about the Duvalier dictatorship and Haiti's legacy of political violence that cracks begin to show in his polished veneer.

He remains an unrepentant admirer of François ("Papa Doc") Duvalier, whom he served as bodyguard and army commander, and an uninhibited critic of Duvalier's son Jean-Claude ("Baby Doc"), whom he served briefly as defense minister. "Jean-Claudism was not Duvalierism," he declares with disdain. He regrets, but not with particular vigor, the "deplorable . . . unjustifiable" violence of last November 29, in which armed gunmen killed at least 34 people who had been lining up outside polling booths to vote in the first free Haitian election in three decades. But he also criticizes the international media for ignoring the alleged massacre of 1,500 voodoo priests by vengeance-seeking mobs after the Duvalier dynasty collapsed two years ago with the ignominious flight of Baby Doc. The general reserves special resentment for the United States and Israel. "Is it worse in Haiti than in Israel now? Did the Americans cut off aid to Israel? Why don't they send teams of observers to Israel? Why don't they cut off aid to Israel?" he rages.

These comments were made in a rare interview with a handful of foreign reporters. Apart from the hostile stares we received from the small army of relatives, retainers, and mean-looking bodyguards, the general, on first impression, appears no more paranoid or sinister than many other Third World military officers. Indeed, he is smoother than most. Nonetheless, it was evident from the moment we approached his family compound near the center of Port-au-Prince that General Raymond's mere proximity inspires terror for many Haitians. As we pulled up outside his gate, George, our intrepid Haitian guide, tried to hide under the dashboard. The Haitian Supreme Court affirmed shortly before the country's much-ridiculed election on January 17 that General Raymond was one of five presidential candidates whose support for the Duvalier dictatorship was so notorious that he had to be disqualified from running as a candidate for president.

But what really makes General Raymond the object of fear in the Haitian capital are the rumors about the role he or his family played in the election day massacre last No-

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vember. According to scuttlebutt, which is bolstered by third- and fourth-hand eyewitness reports (the best you can get), some of the armed men who shot up voters and journalists that bloody morning used cars and vans that departed from and returned to the large driveway inside the gates to the general's compound.

The general acknowledges he is the subject of such rumors. He said that an inquiry commission set up by Haiti's military government to investigate the death squad killings had questioned him in early January. He denies any role in the slaughter, but goes on to suggest that the media's concern about it is exaggerated. In an official decree, the government announced that the results of its death squad investigation would be completed by January 15, two days before the recent army-sponsored election. When the appointed hour arrived, no report appeared, and there was no indication that its results will ever be published.

FOR THE foreseeable future, Haitians can probably expect only feeble steps away from the despotism and plunder that have long prevailed in their country's politics. If the atmosphere of the recent elections is anything to go by, the euphoria surrounding the early-morning departure of Baby Doc and his hated bride, Michelle, has been replaced by the sullen mistrust, cynicism, and fear that dominated Haiti at the height of the Duvalier reign.

The bloodshed of November washed away what little hope there was left, and testified to the hold that the ghost of Papa Doc still has over Haitian society. Despite the terms of the new constitution approved overwhelmingly in a referendum last winter, which stipulated that the November election should be run by an independent commission and that Duvalierists should be kept from running as candidates, old habits died hard. Wealthy Haitians told me they thought the electoral council committed a horrible injustice by disqualifying the presidential candidacy of Clovis Desinor, a former Duvalierist finance minister linked to the Tontons Macoute, the infamous Duvalier goon squad. (As it was, he was even excluded from the January elections.)

The Haitian army refused to supply protection for the independent electoral council. Army commanders and Duvalier die-hards convinced themselves that "communists and socialists" on the electoral council—a leftist in their eyes being anyone who did not recognize some good in Papa Doc—were conspiring to rig the November election for one of four leading candidates, a human rights lawyer named Gerard Gourgue. The existence of such a conspiracy—which even the U.S. Embassy scoffs at—is now being used by army leaders to explain, if not excuse, the November slaughter. One particularly sad aspect of the campaign for the January election was the public declarations, by most of the leading presidential candidates, that the November 29 election was indeed rigged by left-wing conspirators.

The rumor mill in Port-au-Prince now says that the army staged its own election on January 17 in the expectation that the $100 million in American military aid, which was cut off after November 29, would be restored if the army made even a feeble gesture toward democracy. But the elections were such a travesty that they may backfire on the Namphy junta. Election safeguards were laughable. Candidates were expected to print—or in most cases photocopy—their own ballots and distribute them to supporters around the country. Officials at polling places were witnessed taking one candidate's ballots out of voters' hands and substituting them with another candidate's ballots. Outside some polling places, the streets were littered with the lemons and limes that voters used to remove the supposedly indelible ink with which their fingers had been marked to stop them from voting twice. Eyewitnesses saw one fellow vote three times. In some polling places, those allowed to vote were obviously under age. Colleagues observed a five-year-old handing her ballot to an official.

The greatest flaw in the army's election, however, was visible from even a brief drive through the capital's streets. Whether the product of fear or support for an election boycott called by opposition leaders, on election day Port-au-Prince—a teeming, steaming anthill on even the holiest of holidays—was deserted of both traffic and pedestrians, except in a few of the worst slums, where residents are too poor to escape to the hills. The only traffic to slow the motorcade of General Namphy as he left the National Palace to cast his ballot around the corner was the cars of photographers and TV crews anxious to get one of the few interesting pictures of the day.

MARK HOSENBALL

Mark Hosenball is a reporter in the Washington bureau of the London *Sunday Times*.

Communism's democratic economics.

MARKETING MARX

READERS OF the daily press over the last nine months might understandably be confused about the significance of reforms occurring under Communist governments around the world. The most startling news comes from Moscow. Here a giant effort to restructure the Soviet economy coincides with a variety of social and political initiatives, including the increased emigration of Soviet Jews, Armenians, and Volga Germans, demonstrations by nationalities demanding greater political rights, and the appearance of films and plays critical of the Stalinist era. Even "socialist legality" has come up for reform, with proposals to eliminate internal exile and to drop "sluggish schizophrenia"—the malady often attributed to dissidents—as a recognized psychological ailment.

In Beijing the political liberalization that came to a halt

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during most of 1987 has cautiously re-emerged in the wake of the Party's 13th Congress last November. Despite the worrying check of inflation, estimated to have reached 20 percent last year in the cities, the clip of the country's economic reform continues briskly. Yet even if the new general secretary, Zhao Ziyang, plays golf and wears Western-style suits, the character of political experimentation, recently denounced in Beijing as "bourgeois liberalization," appears to be considerably more modest than in the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, Vietnam seems to be moving toward Moscow-style reforms. Only in Cuba is there backpedaling on the return to the private markets. Do these rapid-paced developments have a common source, and is there a compass that can chart their course?

An effort is undoubtedly being made in the centers of world communism to increase economic productivity. Of course, the nature of the obstacles to economic growth differ in China and the Soviet Union. And the reforms will have their economic cost, as a rise in inflation and a cut in welfare entitlements in both countries indicate. Yet in their reaction to the waste and rigidity of a "command economy," and in their demand for quick technological modernization, both countries are open to pragmatic change. In Deng Xiaoping's celebrated phrase: "White cat, black cat, what does it matter so long as it catches the mouse?"

BUT IF the origin of reform is economic, the compass we need to map the deeper significance of events should be political in its settings. For ultimately, the importance of these economic experiments is that they may engender the restructuring of the political bedrock of communism, the Leninist state.

Writing several decades ago, free market advocates such as James Burnham and Friedrich von Hayek, as well as Marxists such as the Yugoslav dissident Milovan Djilas, declared that the central dynamic of totalitarianism lay in centralized state planning. They expected any democratization under communism to be linked to the emergence of a more decentralized or market-oriented economy that would erode the state's power. These writers would not be surprised to see that economic restructuring in China has encouraged students to demand more autonomy from the state and to champion (a bit ambiguously) "democracy" nationwide. But China is not the only country to illustrate these links. In Nicaragua the democratic forces depend for a part of their strength on the continued existence of private property, while in Hungary greater political participation seems to have been deliberately calculated to stimulate economic productivity. In the Soviet Union, Gorbachev has indicated that a part of his program of economic renewal depends on the limited introduction of multiple candidates for leadership posts selected by secret ballot in the Party, at the workplace, and for elected government bodies.

Two issues matter most when charting the impact that economic reform might have on politics: the character of the Party's relationship to civil society and the nature of the Party's own internal organization. In the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution, Lenin substituted the dictatorship of the Party for the self-government of the proletariat that more orthodox Marxists had assumed would emerge under socialism. Citing the backwardness of social relations in Russia and the immaturity of working-class consciousness, Lenin's party-state saw its task as industrializing the country in the interest of the workers. In the process, the means devoured the ends. The rule of the Party became total, unaccountable, permanent. Civil society, which had barely ever existed independently of the state in Russia, was now actually formed by the state. A totalitarian system had come into being (impossible as it was for Marxists to imagine, convinced as they were that any state, including their own, would have to be dependent on social backing for survival).

THE QUESTION today is whether economic reform is giving birth to a civil society where groups can form independently of the state and may even influence government policy. Certainly it is progress if individuals are increasingly left alone by the state, more able to choose their work, spend their earnings, and be free from drives to create "the new socialist man." But unless groups are able to form free of state control and to express themselves on public issues, the fundamental power structure in state-society relations will remain unaltered. There are signs that this is exactly what some Communist leaders intend. How else to interpret Zhao's recent declaration that China is now at a "primary stage of socialism" that will endure for a century or more? Translation: economic experiments will be accompanied by tight political controls.

By contrast, the concessions granted in early January by the Sandinistas for an opposition to form under the terms of the Central American peace plan are potentially important. If the announced reforms are seriously carried through (my own belief is that the Nicaraguan government is making only tactical concessions, but may nonetheless be obliged to live with them), it would mark the first time in history that a Leninist state has ceased to exist by virtue of its own actions. For the same reason, the test of *glasnost* is not such matters as the freedom of emigration for Soviet Jews, however desirable that may be. It is efforts like those of political clubs in Moscow to take stands on public matters, or of environmental groups in Leningrad to criticize government policy and run their own candidates for municipal councils. Should such initiatives succeed, should the legal code recognize the right of individuals to form "unofficial" groups that take stands on important public issues—and who would dare believe it will occur?—these changes could start the dissolution of the Leninist state by ending the Party's monopoly of political power. In the last resort, by Moscow's simply acknowledging that correct social policy is difficult to fashion and that the Central Committee has no monopoly on truth, the Party is undermining one of its chief claims to legitimacy.

As for the internal organization of the Party, the problem is "democratic centralism" as it has existed since 1921, when Lenin tightened the power of the Party hierarchy

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over the rank and file by banning "factions" in the Party and calling for their purge. Secret ballots and multiple candidates for Party positions, currently suggested by Moscow, do little for genuine democratization, since there is little reason to think frank airing of differences will be publicly permitted, and none to believe that higher Party bodies will actually become responsible to those beneath them. Indeed, the kinds of changes that Gorbachev is promoting in Party organization might eventually strengthen the power of the leader over the rank and file, a situation that has not been possible since the death of Stalin in 1953. In China a move away from democratic centralism in Party politics is even less advanced. Debates center on the proper role of the Party relative to the state and leave the question of Party structure alone.

It is true that we have an enormous amount to gain from more positive relations with the Communist world. As Andrei Sakharov has insisted, we have no better option than to hope that the current reforms will breed still more progressive changes at a later date. But it is unlikely that the Leninist state will rapidly—if ever—become liberal, pluralist, or democratic as these terms are understood in the West today. For Communists, the question is how to reform Leninism to make government more efficient and responsive without at the same time either disrupting the Party's control of the state and society or unduly troubling its internal order. It is the relegitimization, not the delegitimization, of a Leninist order that the comrades work to achieve. And, whatever the long-term outcome, the force of entrenched Leninism on these developments (abetted by powerful earlier national traditions of centralized rule in both China and the Soviet Union) is sure to be tremendous. However, the present efforts at encouraging change—in China as well as the Soviet Union—might not be so much a crisis in communism as the beginning of its renewal.

TONY SMITH

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The unkindest tax cut of all.

NEO-VOODOO ECONOMICS

"Cut that capital gains tax rate to 15 percent. It will create more jobs than you can imagine. It will create more prosperity."
—Vice President George Bush, October 14, 1987

The campaign to undermine the 1986 tax reform act is under way. Behind the scenes are business lobbying groups, such as the American Council for Capital Formation and the American Electronics Association. Out front are Republican presidential hopefuls George Bush and Jack Kemp, along with nearly all the minority members of the House Ways and Means Committee and numerous other, mostly Republican, politicos. What they want is restoration of the special tax break for capital gains. It's a terrible idea.

THE 1986 tax act took long overdue steps to repudiate a tax code that allowed half of the wealthiest people in the country to pay a smaller proportion of their incomes in federal taxes than families at the poverty line. Tax reform wasn't easy. To get the bill through a recalcitrant Senate Finance Committee, then-Chairman Bob Packwood had to figure out how to slash the top income tax rate to less than 30 percent without giving a windfall to the rich. He cut the Gordian knot with two bold strokes: he placed strict limits on using tax-shelter "losses" (the effective tax rate on these can't be less than zero) and abolished the special break for capital gains.

Together these two changes form the core of the individual tax reforms in the 1986 tax act. They explain why the final bill was able to cut the top income tax rate to 28 percent, compared with 35 percent in the administration proposal and 38 percent in the House plan, and not be a boondoggle for the wealthy. Indeed, while the administration proposed a 16 percent tax cut for people making more than $200,000 a year and the House plan offered them a five percent cut, the final 1986 act reduced taxes for the wealthiest people by only 2.4 percent (about $2 billion).

Under tax reform, capital gains, the single largest source of income for the rich, were cut. Profits from selling stocks, bonds, real estate, Van Gogh paintings, and so forth account for almost 40 percent of the income of people making more than $200,000. The old rule exempting from tax 60 percent of such capital gains saved these folks an average of $41,683 in taxes every year. In contrast, the break was worth less than $20 a year to the 88 percent of American families earning under $50,000.

Fairness was not the only reason why ending the capital gains exclusion was a dream come true for tax reformers. The old capital gains break provided a key impetus for many economically wasteful tax shelters that diverted resources from more useful activities. For instance, it fueled the excessive office-building construction that produced vacancy rates averaging close to 20 percent in most big cities. It diverted resources into unproductive investments such as antiques, llamas, and embryonic cattle breeding. A 1981 study by the Agriculture Department found that capital gains treatment for breeding sows actually led farmers to change their breeding practices to a much less efficient approach in order to maximize their tax savings. And as much as one-third of the old tax code was devoted to complicated, largely unsuccessful, attempts by lawmakers to restrict abuses of the capital gains break.

To be sure, a theoretical case can be made for indexing capital gains for inflation, so that only "real" gains are taxed. But such a plan would also entail disallowing deductions for the inflationary component of interest pay-

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ments, as well as taking account of the fact that, unlike other kinds of income, the gains on investments aren't taxed until the investments are sold.

Whatever the merits of inflation indexing, it's not what the advocates of lower capital gains tax rates want. Mark Bloomfield of the American Council for Capital Formation, a trade association chaired by well-known Washington lobbyist Charls E. Walker that played a key role in getting capital gains taxes cut in 1978, emphasizes that his group "opposes" indexing capital gains. "We want a lower rate," he says. "We want it to apply to individuals and corporations, and we want it to cover everything that was classified as capital gains under old law, including profits from selling collectibles and timber" (the American Council's financial sponsors include several timber companies).

Specifically, Bloomfield, his fellow capital-gains-tax-cut lobbyists, and the politicians who have taken up their cause want to cap the tax rate on capital gains at 15 percent. It's a carefully targeted proposal, since four out of five families already are in the 15 percent tax bracket or less. (The marginal rate hits 28 percent for families of four making above about $44,400. A gimmick pushes the rate up to 33 percent for incomes between $94,000 and $237,000; at $237,000 it drops back down to 28 percent.)

OF COURSE, whatever they may believe, those who want to reduce capital gains aren't selling the idea as a giveaway to the rich. Instead, they make two claims for what they call "the 15 percent solution": first, that reinstating the capital gains break would stimulate the economy, and second, that it would actually raise, rather than reduce, revenues. To this end, the image of the swashbuckling entrepreneur dumping capital into risky but socially useful enterprises is conjured up. Advocates of lowered capital gains taxes contend that the 1978 increase in the capital gains exclusion from 50 percent to 60 percent produced a flood of venture capital. But a 1985 Congressional Budget Office report refutes this claim. The CBO found that the growth in the venture capital industry began following a rapid surge in demand for high-technology electronic products in the mid-'70s, and was well under way before the 1978 capital gains tax cut.

In addition, almost all of the increase in venture capital investment that took place after 1978 came from tax-exempt pension funds and other entities that were unaffected by the 1978 tax changes (pension funds were allowed to get into venture capital after a 1978 relaxation of a federal rule limiting "risky" pension investments). In contrast, the share of venture capital supplied by individual investors (for whom the 1978 capital gains tax cut was supposed to be an "incentive") declined markedly.

Vice President Bush justifies his support for the 15 percent solution by talking about "international competitiveness" and "a global economic battle" that requires savings and investment. Economists almost unanimously agree that America does need to save more, although they also agree that any reduction in consumer spending would be highly dangerous. But Bush's contention that lower capital gains taxes are the solution to our trade and savings problems ignores history. After the 1981 tax act, which cut the top capital gains tax rate from 28 percent to 20 percent, America's overall trade balance went from a small surplus to a mind-boggling deficit that exceeded $150 billion last year—primarily because of budget deficits that resulted from huge tax cuts for the well-off. The personal saving rate fell to all-time lows. It's hard to understand how a rerun of past policies can be the way to fight a "global economic battle." Nor does rekindling the tax shelter industry and thus rediverting resources into bad investments solely for their tax advantages look like a promising economic strategy.

Given the crying need to reduce the federal budget deficit, it may seem irresponsible, even stupid, to be proposing a major tax reduction. But not to worry. According to Bush, cutting capital gains taxes "would not cost the government money. It would gain additional revenue." The vice president's neo-voodoo position, echoed by his Republican cohorts in Congress such as Kemp, Senator Rudy Boschwitz of Minnesota, and Senator Bob Kasten of Wisconsin, is that a lower tax rate would encourage investors to sell their buildings, stocks, and art treasures more often, thus increasing the Treasury's total receipts. This claim, rather than any alleged economic benefits, is the real core of the case for reinstating the capital gains tax break.

"The fact that low rates encourage sales was proven at the end of [1986]," Boschwitz insists, "when the lower rates of the old law created a flurry of transactions and an enormous windfall for the Treasury." Investors did scramble to take advantage of the expiring capital gains exclusion before the new tax law went into effect. As a result, a one-time surge in taxes collected on capital gains added an estimated $12.5 billion to fiscal 1987 revenues. But Boschwitz has learned the wrong lesson from that experience. If one really wants to encourage a short-term wave of selling (not clearly a great strategy to help the stock market), the way to do it is not to cut capital gains taxes, but to announce a future increase.

MORE fundamentally, defenders of cutting the capital gains tax rate argue that when the capital gains loophole was expanded back in 1978, the Treasury actually gained revenues due to increased turnover. A 1986 study by the IRS found that from 1977 to 1982, capital gains reported on tax returns did go up sharply, increasing by almost three-quarters in constant dollars (excluding generally untaxed home sales). But much of that reflected a boom in tax shelters that allowed the wealthy to convert their regularly taxed income into lightly taxed capital gains—thereby *lowering* revenues. And despite that artificial increase in reported gains, total taxes paid on capital gains grew no faster than the economy and fell as a share of total personal income taxes. According to the IRS statistics, taxes paid on capital gains (in constant dollars) went up by only seven percent from 1977 to 1982, exactly the same as the increase

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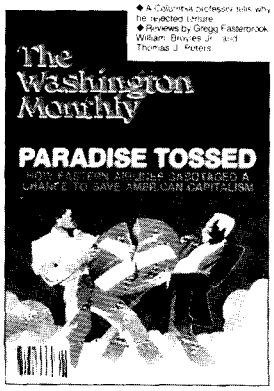

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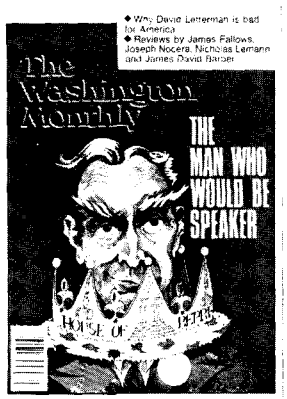

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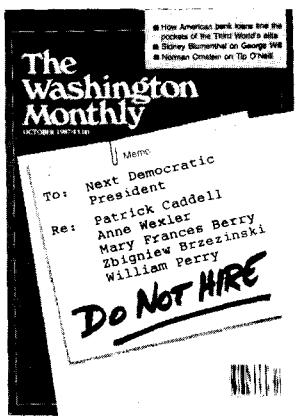

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in the gross national product. As a share of personal income taxes, capital gains taxes fell by 12 percent over the same period.

The really interesting question is what would have happened in the absence of a cut in the capital gains tax. Proponents of cutting capital gains taxes rely primarily on studies by Harvard Professor Lawrence Lindsey. Using a methodology developed by former Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Feldstein, Lindsey found that the 1978 tax cuts produced considerably more revenues than would otherwise have been the case. In a study paid for by the American Council for Capital Formation, Lindsey went on to predict that cutting the capital gains tax rate to 15 percent now would increase federal revenues by an astonishing $31 billion over the next three years.

Urban Institute economist Joseph Minarik, a close student of capital gains taxation who helped write the Bradley-Gephardt tax reform bill, says, however, that "Lindsey's numbers don't represent actual experience, and work done at the U.S. Treasury Department clearly demonstrates that." Minarik refers to a 1985 Treasury report concluding that the 1978 capital gains tax reductions, after a small, one-shot increase in revenues in 1979, led to lower tax collections thereafter. Minarik also notes that, with the exception of the 1979 blip, reported capital gains have been closely linked not to tax rates, but to the performance of the stock market. This hardly surprising correlation, he says, fully explains more recent increases in reported capital gains (which took place in the absence of any further change in the tax rules).

Minarik and the Reagan Treasury Department's position is buttressed by some rare real-world evidence—a control group, in effect—that clinches their case. Satya Poddar, a former high official with Canada's Ministry of Finance, intrigued by the claim that the increase in reported capital gains in the United States from 1977 to 1982 had been caused by the 1978 capital gains tax cuts, compared the American pattern with Canada's. He found that the Canadian capital gains realizations were virtually identical to what happened in the United States—despite the fact that Canada made no change in its taxation of capital gains.

Canada collected much more in capital gains taxes as a result of the increase in reported gains. Thus Poddar's comparison indicates that the 1978 capital gains tax cuts produced a double downward whammy on U.S. tax revenues: lowering tax collections both on capital gains and, because of the tax shelters that were stimulated, on the regular income of the well-off as well.

The 1986 tax reform act represented a drastic change in philosophy by Congress and the administration. But even after reform, the rich are paying 25 percent less in total federal taxes than they were ten years ago, while taxes on the poor are up by 17 percent. And the evidence suggests that lowering capital gains tax could seriously reduce revenue in a period in which deficit reduction is the central priority. Meanwhile, the tax system continues to fail at what ought to be its fundamental task: raising enough money to pay for the cost of government programs. Cutting capital gains taxes would make it even worse. In the future, Congress and our next president will have to decide whether to pursue the spirit of tax reform in addressing the budget deficit, or to reverse course.

ROBERT S. MCINTYRE AND JONATHAN CRYSTAL

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Brown v. Board of Re-education.

HOW TO SAVE THE HOMELESS MENTALLY ILL

BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

HARD CASES make bad law. Joyce Brown is a hard case. She was one of the first persons locked up in Bellevue Hospital when New York City decided to begin sweeping the homeless mentally ill off the streets. And she was first to challenge in court her forcible hospitalization. She won, but an appeals court reversed the decision. Now that a court has upheld her right to refuse treatment, the city will release her any day now. The case, like Brown herself, is a muddle and making a muddle of the law. But it dramatically illustrates what is wrong with the current debate about the homeless mentally ill and with the limits of benevolence that our society permits itself to accord them.

Everything about Brown allows contradictory explanations. Court documents refer not to Joyce Brown but to Billie Boggs, the name of a local TV personality and one of the several false names Brown adopted. Is she delusional or did she choose new names the better to hide from her sisters who in the past had tried to get her hospitalized? She cut up and publicly urinated on paper money. Is that crazy or, as her lawyers claim, was she symbolically dem-

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onstrating disdain for the patronizing solicitude of strangers who gave her money? She shouted obscenities in the street. Is that the result of demented rage or was it her only effective means of warding off the busybodies of the city's Project HELP (Homeless Emergency Liaison Project) who might take her away to a hospital?

In sum, was she living on a grate at 2nd and East 65th because she is mentally ill or because she has chosen the life of a professional (her word) street person?

"A LUCID and rational woman who is down on her luck," Brown's ACLU lawyer calls her. Being down on one's luck can just be that. But it can be a sign of something graver, namely the downward social mobility that is characteristic of schizophrenia and that is caused by the gradual disintegration of the personality that marks its course. The classic picture is: brilliant physics major drops out, becomes cabbie, becomes unemployed, drifts, becomes homeless. Brown was a secretary, lost her job, did drugs, wandered from sister's house to sister's house, then ended up a bag lady.

She is a puzzle. The first judge thought the ACLU's psychiatrists correct. The appeals court bought the city's diagnosis. Dr. Francine Cournos, the most recent court-appointed (and thus disinterested) psychiatrist, determined that she did suffer from "a serious mental illness," that she "would benefit from medication," but that, since she refused, forcing it upon her would do more harm than good.

My guess is that Dr. Cournos is right. Brown most likely is a chronic schizophrenic. But that is a condition more reliably diagnosed by observing a patient's course than by a snapshot observation. The symptoms can remit for a time. When Brown was cleaned up, dressed up, and given attention, she appeared lucid and rational in court. Left on her own, however, her course had been relentlessly downhill. The proof will come if, as is likely, she ends up back at the hospital.

But the lawyers' duel was not just over whether Brown is mentally ill. Mental illness is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for involuntary commitment. The other condition is dangerousness: a person must also be a danger to himself or to others before he may be forcibly taken care of.

Brown's ACLU lawyers argued for the now traditional standard of dangerousness: imminent danger, meaning harm—suicide or extreme neglect leading to serious injury or death—within hours or days. The city was pushing for a broader standard: eventual danger, meaning that Brown's life was such that she inevitably would come to grief, even if it could not now be foreseen exactly when and how. Maureen McLeod, one of the city's lawyers, protested having "to wait until something happens to her. It is our duty to act before it is too late."

Is it? Generally speaking, the answer is no. We don't permit preventive detention even for criminals who we "know" are going to commit crimes. We have to wait and catch them. If involuntary commitment requires that dangerousness be shown, then it is not enough to say that something awful will happen eventually. By that standard, heavy smoking ought to be a criterion for commitment.

The city, trying desperately to stretch the dangerousness criterion to allow the forced hospitalization of Joyce Brown, had to resort to a very strained logic. After all, Brown had spent a year on the grate without any apparent physical harm from illness, malnutrition, or exposure. As the appeals court dissent pointed out, the city's case came down to a claim that Brown would ultimately be assaulted if she continued living and acting as provocatively as she was. But there is hardly a New Yorker who is not subject to assault merely by passing through the streets of New York. It is odd to blame the pathology of the city on her and lock her up to protect her from it.

The idea of eventual harm as opposed to imminent harm is slippery and arbitrary. Brown had already been exposed to all the things that the city said would do her in—traffic, disease, strangers, the elements—and had survived quite nicely. The city was reduced to arguing that her luck was going to run out. It had to make this claim because it had to prove dangerousness. But why should a civilized society have to prove that a person's mental incapacity will lead to death before it is permitted to save that person? Should not degradation be reason enough?

The standard for the involuntary commitment of the homeless mentally ill is wrong. It should not be dangerousness but helplessness. We have a whole array of laws (e.g., on drug abuse and prostitution) that prohibit certain actions not primarily because they threaten life but because they degrade the person. In order to override the liberty of the severely mentally ill, one should not be forced to claim—as the city disingenuously claimed in the Brown case—that life is at stake, but that a minimal human dignity is at stake.

JOYCE BROWN is a tough case because it is at least possible that she is, in fact, not mentally ill at all, only unlucky, eccentric, and willful. Fine. But you cannot make that case for thousands of other homeless people. Helen Phillips, for example, picked up in the same New York City round-up as Brown, lives in Pennsylvania Station and is convinced that plutonium is poisoning the water. For the homeless who are clearly mentally ill, why should it be necessary to convince a judge that, left alone, they will die? The vast majority won't. It should be enough to convince a judge that, left alone, they will suffer.

Moreover, the suffering is needless. It can be mitigated by a society that summons the courage to give the homeless mentally ill adequate care, over their objections if need be. In a hospital they will at the very least get adequate clothing and shelter. And for some, medication will relieve the torment of waking dreams.

What prevents us from doing this is the misguided and pernicious civil libertarian impulse that holds liberty too sacred to be overridden for anything other than the preservation of life. For the severely mentally ill, however, liberty is not just an empty word but a cruel hoax. Free to do

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what? To defecate in one's pants? To wander around Grand Central Station begging for sustenance? To freeze to death in Central Park? The week that Joyce Brown won her reprieve from forced medication, three homeless men were found frozen dead in New York. What does freedom mean for a paranoid schizophrenic who is ruled by voices commanded by his persecutors and rattling around in his head?

WHAT TO DO? The New York City sweep is only the first temporary step. It yields a bath, a check-up, a diagnosis, and the beginning of treatment. The sicker patients will need long-term custodial care in a psychiatric hospital. Others might respond to treatment and graduate to the less restrictive environment of a local clinic or group home. Many of these people will fall apart and have to be swept up and cycled through the system again.

A sensible approach to the problem begins with the conviction that those helpless, homeless, and sick are the responsibility of the state. Society must be willing to assert control even if protection and treatment have to be given involuntarily. These people are owed asylum. Whether the asylums should be large or small, rural or urban is a matter for debate. (In my view a mix of asylum size and location would serve the widest spectrum of patients' needs.) What should by now be beyond debate is that the state must take responsibility for the homeless mentally ill. And that means asserting control over their lives at least during their most severe incapacity.

In 1963 President Kennedy helped launch the community mental health revolution that emptied America's state mental hospitals. Kennedy said in his message to Congress, "Reliance on the cold mercy of custodial isolation will be supplanted by the open warmth of community concern." It wasn't. In the turbulence of urban life even the mentally well have trouble finding community, let alone deriving from it any warmth. The mentally ill are even less likely to find it. Everyone is for community mental health care—until it comes to his community. This may be deplorable but it is a fact. And it is cruel to allow the mentally ill to suffer neglect pending rectification of that fact, under the assumption that until the community is ready to welcome the mentally ill, the street is better than the asylum. It is not.

In 1955 state psychiatric hospitals had 559,000 patients. Today there are about 130,000, a decline of 75 percent. Now, the incidence of severe mental illness has not changed. (Schizophrenia, for example, afflicts about one percent of the population.) Nor have drugs and modern treatment yielded a cure rate of 75 percent. Many of the 75 percent discharged from the state hospitals have simply been abandoned. They have become an army of grate-dwellers.

Helping them will require, first, rebuilding the mental hospital system. These hospitals do not have to be rural, they do not have to be massive, and they do not have to be run-down. The entire American medical care system runs on incentives. Psychiatry, social work, and nursing are not immune to the inducement that good money would offer to work with the severely ill.

Second, a new asylum system will require support for a string of less restrictive halfway environments and for the personnel to run them. New York State has just announced a program to supply another element of psychiatric care: a new cadre of case workers to supervise intensively the most severely ill. They would follow the mentally ill through all parts of the system, even back onto the streets, and offer supervision, advice, and some services. But facilitators cannot be enough. If there are no beds in a state mental hospital when the patient is severely delusional or self-destructive, if there are no halfway houses during recovery or remission, then the case worker is left helpless. Anybody who has worked with the mentally ill knows that all the goodwill in the world is insufficient if the institutions are not there. Intensive case management can guide a patient through a rebuilt asylum system. Without such a system, however, they can only provide the most superficial succor. The basic facts of the homeless mentally ill, destitution and degradation, will remain unchanged.

REBUILDING AN ASYLUM system is one problem we can and should throw money at. It will take a lot. The way to do it is to say to Americans: You are pained and offended by homelessness. We propose to get the most wretched, confused, and disruptive of the homeless off the streets and into clean and humane asylums. We need to pay for them. We propose capping the mortgage interest deduction: less of a tax break on your house so that others can be housed. (A cap at $20,000 would yield $1 billion of revenues annually.) A new asylum system begins with concern for the elementary dignity of the homeless mentally ill. But it does not end there. The rest of us need it too. Not just, as the cynics claim, for reasons of cleanliness, so that the comfortable bourgeois does not have his daily routine disturbed by wretchedness. Getting the homeless mentally ill off the streets is an exercise in morality, not aesthetics.

It is not our aesthetic but our moral sensibilities that are most injured by the spectacle of homelessness. The city, with its army of grate-dwellers, is a school for callousness. One's natural instincts to help are suppressed every day. Moreover, they have to be suppressed if one is to function: there are simply too many homeless. Thirty years ago if you saw a person lying helpless on the street, you ran to help him. Now you step over him. You know that he is not an accident victim. He lives there. Trying to get him out of his cardboard house is not a simple act of mercy of which most people are quite capable. It is a major act of social work that only the professional and the saintly can be expected to undertake. To expect saintliness of the ordinary citizen is bad social policy. Further, to expose him hourly to a wretchedness far beyond his power to remedy is to make moral insensitivity a requirement of daily living. Society must not leave the ordinary citizen with no alternative between ignoring the homeless and playing Mother Teresa. A civilized society ought to offer its people some communal act that lies somewhere in between, such as contributing to the public treasury to build an asylum system to care for these people.

Project HELP, the necessary first stage in such a system, is

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already under attack. First, because it curtails civil liberties. Second, because it sets up a revolving door: off the street, into a hospital for 21 days, then to some lightly supervised home, then back on the streets. In fact, those picked up in Project HELP have been given a high priority for scarce state hospital and other psychiatric beds. (Of the 29 New York patients who have thus far left Bellevue, 21 went to a special 50-bed unit at Creedmoor Psychiatric Center and eight have been discharged to family or adult homes.) It is hard to place the rest in state hospitals or in existing community services because there are few of either: the first as a matter of conscious policy, the second as a matter of political neglect. The way to avert the revolving-door problem is not by leaving the homeless mentally ill on the streets, but by building a long-term psychiatric care system that can accommodate them.

Third, charge the critics, Project HELP deals only with the very tip of the iceberg, so far 70 out of thousands. True. But those 70 are, after all, real suffering people. Moreover, as proper long-term facilities are built, there is no reason why Project HELP cannot become their triage service, assigning the homeless mentally ill to appropriate care.

Still, it will not do to have illusions about what can be achieved. After winning the appeal in the Brown case, Mayor Ed Koch declared himself eager "to treat her medically. I want this woman to get well, as quickly as possible." Unfortunately, chronic schizophrenics do not get well quickly. Some never get well. This is not a question of getting them off the street, giving them an injection, and letting them go. It is a question of getting people permanently off the street and into a system of comprehensive long-term care.

Rebuilding that system is a question of money. But being prepared to pick people up and send them into it—and keep them in it, if necessary—is a question of political will. It requires relinquishing the illusions of community and the phony promise of liberty that led to the dismantling of the system over the last 30 years. It requires a new consensus that a life of even minimal dignity is preferable to a wretchedness the homeless endure in the name of rights from which, like the world around them, they have long been alienated. Most of the homeless mentally ill picked up so far seem to share, as far as they can, that view. They have not protested the city's efforts. (Less than a fifth of those hospitalized thus far have lodged legal challenges against their commitment. Two challenges, including Brown's, have met with some success.) Most are grateful for a safe and warm hospital bed. What they seem to fear is being carted off to one of the wretched emergency shelters, where they feel—rightly—more endangered than they do on the street.

A NEW ASYLUM SYSTEM will not solve the homeless problem. Obviously the mentally ill are not the only category of homeless people in America. There are at least two others. Some of the homeless are not helpless but defiantly indigent. This is Joyce Brown, as she depicts herself: a professional street person, a lucid survivor who has chosen a life of drift. "It was my choice to live on the streets," she says. "It was an experience." Such people used to be called hoboes. Then there are the victims of economic calamity, such as family breakup or job loss. Often these are single mothers with children. Unlike the hoboes, they hate the street and want to get off, but lack the money, skills, and social supports. Some nonetheless try very hard: two homeless mothers who testified recently at a House hearing are actually working and putting kids through school.

We can debate for years what to do for these people. Should the hoboes who prefer street life be forced off the street in the name of order? And how best to help the homeless who are simply too poor to buy decent housing in the city? Whatever the answers to these questions, it is both cruel and dishonest to defer addressing the mentally ill homeless—for whom choice is not an issue and for whom poverty is a symptom, not the cause, of their misery—until we have figured out a solution to the rest.

WHEN THE mentally ill infiltrate the ranks of another deviant group, criminals, we try to segregate them and treat them differently. We do not await a cure for psychopathy or a solution to criminality before applying different standards of treatment for the criminally insane. There is no reason to defer saving the homeless mentally ill until the solution to the rest of homelessness is found. Moreover, whatever solutions are eventually offered the non-mentally ill homeless, they will have little relevance to those who are mentally ill. Housing vouchers, counseling, and job training won't do much for Helen Phillips until we get the plutonium out of the water. And since we may never succeed, she will need more than housing vouchers, counseling, job training. She will need constant care.

The argument over how many of the homeless are mentally ill is endless. The estimates, which range from one-quarter to three-quarters, vary with method, definition, and ideology. But so what if even the lowest estimates are right? Even if treating the mentally ill does not end homelessness, how can that possibly justify not treating the tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands who would benefit from a partial solution?

In the end, the Brown case boils down to a problem of category, not a problem of principle. Is she a schizophrenic or a hobo? There is inevitably some blurring of the lines between categories. (Studies of homeless families in New York have shown that many heads of these families exhibit signs of mental illness.) But even the judge who ruled in her favor on the grounds that she was not mentally ill upheld the city's program.

In Brown's case, we will not know which category she really belongs to until her illness, if it is there, plays itself out. We will find out soon enough if she is a professional street person or a chronic schizophrenic. But there are others for whom there is no need to wait. The diagnosis is clear, and treatment, or at least care, is available. In their cases, to wait is a dereliction of social duty bordering on criminal neglect. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

A Clutch of Comedies

To see six comedies in 12 days is a sobering experience. Not that there weren't laughs in them: the worst had some, the best had more. But to see six in a row is to become numbingly aware of blood, sweat, toil, and tears. Comedy, the platitude assures us, is serious work. But work is not identical with labor. Bergson's familiar definition of comedy is "the mechanical encrusted on the living." He didn't say "the mechanical smothering the living."

Planes, Trains and Automobiles
(Paramount)

The Couch Trip
(Orion)

Throw Momma from the Train
(Orion)

Moonstruck
(MGM)

Good Morning, Vietnam
(Buena Vista)

Raw
(Paramount)

Items:

Planes, Trains and Automobiles. A good initial idea, swollen into the stupid. The small irritations of daily life make a ripe comic theme: having someone steal your taxi when you're in a rush to get to an airport, airport delays—all the small hassles that modern conveniences have brought with them and that can quickly become major depressants. But John Hughes's script, which he directed, escalates the familiar into slapstick and fakery. Steve Martin, as a suffering traveler trying to get home to Chicago from New York in time for Thanksgiving, reverts to his pre-*Roxanne* "wild and crazy guy" antics. Tiresome. The film's one asset is John Candy, the human balloon, a fellow traveler who attaches himself to Martin in mutual misadventure. Candy creates a bore who tries hard not to be boring, can't help himself, and is pathetic.

The Couch Trip. A clever con, who conned his way out of an Illinois pen into an Illinois mental hospital, cons his way further into replacing a vacationing radio psychologist in L.A. Credibility is not the test for this story, just light, continuous invention; and where invention should be, there's only drudgery. Dan Aykroyd does what he can—not an unlimited amount—to keep the plot breezy. Somehow Walter Matthau strayed into this rat maze, and his presence helps obliquely, by reminding us of his past wry performances. There's only one memorable moment in the picture. At one point a lot of pills are emptied into a hotel pool that has ducks and swans in it. The fowl eat the pills, then climb out and stagger. The film's credits name some animal trainers. (And you can also hear *The Marriage of Figaro* overture played on the tuba if that's what you've been waiting for.)

Throw Momma from the Train. Potentially funny because it has Danny DeVito and a promising premise—a spoof of *Strangers on a Train*. In Hitchcock's film, two strangers meet, and each reveals that he wishes another person dead; each of the strangers agrees to kill the other's enemy because each is unconnected with the proposed victim and will be unsuspected. Stu Silver's parodic script makes one of the "strangers" a teacher of writing who hates his ex-wife because she stole a manuscript of his, which became a best seller. The other "stranger" (DeVito) is one of his students, who has a monstrous mother. But Silver's script is leaden, and DeVito's direction can't lift it. After a while, all we wait for is the way out. Clearly they can't really have two murders in a comedy as hokey as this. How are they going to tie things up without anyone getting hurt? They do tie it up, of course, but the finish isn't worth the wait.

Moonstruck. A freak. Take one large slab of conventional Italian-American domestic comedy, full of quarrels and tears and family love. (Dean Martin sings "That's Amore" on the sound track at the start and the finish.) Add large dollops of drastic betrayal—a man sleeps with his brother's fiancée. Then fold in great chunks of talk about the futility of existence and the void at the heart of the universe. Mix them all together, and end it creamily, with the camera cruising around the Brooklyn home of the heroine, picking out family photos and finishing on a picture of the Sicilian grandparents as Papa's voice says, "A la famiglia!" The screenplay is by John Patrick Shanley, but it sounds like an uneasy collaboration between a 1940s screenwriter for Henry Armetta and a recent alumnus of a graduate playwriting program. Two cheery notes: Nicolas Cage, as the erring brother, shows surprising signs of life, and Cher, as the erring fiancée, confounds those who swore she was a remote-control robot.

Good Morning, Vietnam. A good one-man show gone wrong. Robin Williams is a fantastic maniac. Here he plays an Army disc jockey who is sent to Vietnam in 1965 and makes waves. His riffs on the air, which streak off into the blue sky yonder, are almost painfully funny as he free-associates, does perfect vocal imitations of celebrities, and scathes the sta-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Broadcast News. Not nearly as Swiftian as it starts out to be, but this comedy of life and love among the TV newscasters has gleaming dialogue and deft playing. (Reviewed 2/1/88)

The Dead. John Huston's last work respects Joyce's story without encompassing it. Anjelica Huston as Gretta, however, is not to be missed. (12/21/87)

Housekeeping. A delicate, seemingly comic but searching film about spirits of the frontier still hovering over the Northwest. Excellently acted and directed. (1/18/88)

Ironweed. For those—many, I hope—who don't want to miss anything by Meryl Streep and Jack Nicholson. They are vivid as drunken bums in this otherwise unrewarding tale. (1/25/88)

SK

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tus quo. All these blasts are clearly Williams's own invention, his own form of "automatic writing," unconnected with the script. In more ways than one. That script, by Mitch Markowitz, is a sentimental drag, full of holes and bogs, and it strains to transmute Williams's disc-jockeying into a mode of heroism. If they snipped everything out of this film but Williams's monologues, it would be worth seeing. It's almost worth seeing anyway.

Raw. This *is* a one-man show, and a troubling one. It's a filmed record of a performance that Eddie Murphy gave at the Felt Forum in New York a few years ago. As film, no comment is needed. It's Murphy all the way, but that's a disturbing way. I yield to no man—well, perhaps to two or three thousand—in my admiration of Murphy's talents: his energy, his timing, his mimicry, his overwhelming impudence. All of these qualities flood into *Raw*. Murphy just comes out and zings away, from Moment One, the way that Richard Pryor did in two "concert" films. But Pryor, blue though his talk was, was pink compared with Murphy, and, much more important, Pryor came across as an appealing man. Murphy is insistently homophobic, aggressively macho, and—not the same thing as blue language—gutter-minded. By the end of the film, I felt that I'd spent an hour and a half at the lowest level where human life can still be called human. The audience at the Felt Forum loved it. So did the audience, black and white, men and women, in the theater where I saw the film. Apparently anger, undifferentiated, truly raw, is a prime drug of our time.

"Comedy," said Malraux, "is so important that it alone has unified the capitalist world, doing what the will to revolution did for the Communist world." An arguable statement (at both ends). Still, even though it is not the sole such factor, the frenzy to make comedies—spiritless, carpentered—certainly unifies Hollywood; and the box-office success of the items above reveals that even degraded comedy unifies a society desperate for respite from itself.

MARK STEVENS ON ART

A Poet of the Apocalypse

When the Nazis made themselves at home in German Romantic culture, they not only defaced a great tradition. They also rendered suspect any larger-than-life dream. Henceforth the reach for an art of epic scale, an essential aspiration of German culture, must cast an uncertain shadow. Purity, grandeur, and the sublime would no longer sustain the same conviction. Even forgiving minds could not quite divorce Wagner's music from his anti-Semitism, for example, the Jews having suffered so much from men with stars in their eyes. The spaces between art and life, the ideal and the bestial, became more treacherous than ever.

An obvious enough point. Yet few German painters since the war have rendered this imaginative "space" with anything like the success of their contemporaries in film, such as Werner Herzog or Hans Jürgen Syberberg. There has been no lack of parody and expressionist disgust with the general run of life, of course: Dada and expressionism remained untainted, having been denounced by the Nazis. Artists have also had recourse to squeaky clean formalist styles—minimalism, for instance—with which to sidestep German history. But these artful approaches left out so much. It has obviously required too strong a stomach, too blackly romantic a heart, and too wary an intelligence to portray the full German story. One would have to be an alchemist, and a sad one, to trace the dark and stinking traffic between gold and base metal.

Anselm Kiefer, a German artist born in the bridge year of 1945, has accepted the challenge. A poet of the apocalypse, a student of the broken wing and the burnt field, Kiefer seems determined to stare down the ghosts and, in doing so, to repossess German culture. He seems intent, in particular, on reclaiming the Romantic tradition, on making a spiritually charged Wagnerian art that does not represent a failure of taste, or tact, or memory. For an artist today I can think of no larger ambition. A German doubtless has a particular closeness to the terrors of history; but when it comes to dreaming the big dream, we are now all worried Germans.

Kiefer's art has been greeted with near rapture. It's early yet to talk of "greatness," a word better left to ripen with time, but Kiefer has undoubtedly brought a new power into painting. The large retrospective now at the Art Institute of Chicago offers the first good opportunity to experience, and consider, that power. (The exhibit, jointly organized by the Institute of Fine Arts in Chicago and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, will travel to Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and New York.) Through careful selection the curator, Mark Rosenthal, has presented the uneven Kiefer at his best. The many mediums in which Kiefer has worked—books, watercolors, paintings—are well represented; the artist's celebrated "straw" paintings, shimmering with an end-of-the-world light, are also plentiful. The catalog is especially good. In a direct and unwoolly style, Rosenthal has deftly analyzed Kiefer's complex iconography. At the same time, knowing that no subject in art matters unless it finds powerful visual form, Rosenthal has also exercised discrimination: it was not until the early 1980s, in his view, that Kiefer really hit his stride.

The young Kiefer, showing little interest in a purely formal art, took subject matter seriously, particularly if it was German. Indeed, his early work gives the impression of an artist who must, before mastering the niceties of art, establish his sense of the German subject. According to Kiefer, the conceptual and performance artist Joseph Beuys (1921-86), a charismatic figure in Germany, was his teacher "in the largest sense." A fighter pilot shot down over Russia during World War II, Beuys had founded his art on his war experience, but his essential subject was the spiritual condition of the postwar world. He hoped to use art as a catalyst to transform life itself. From Beuys, Kiefer gained the "permission" a young artist sometimes needs to address taboo subjects. Like Beuys, Kiefer was determined to confront the past; like Beuys, he aspired to an art of transcendence.

The most daunting subjects attracted Kiefer. To cite a few: Nazis, the Norse myths, the cycles of history, Wagner, alchemy, love, the Holocaust. Like many Romantics, he was also inclined toward the cosmic polarities: purity and abomi-

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nation, good and evil, history and myth, art and nature. How to render these visually was his problem. Kiefer began modestly enough, using some popular devices from the conceptual art of the 1960s and '70s—a style much concerned with narrative, language, photography, and the making of one-of-a-kind books.

In his "books" especially, Kiefer found a flexible way to explore his ideas. These works usually contain a narrative of photographs. (In later books he scorched, drew on, and stuck sand and lead to the photographs.) Through the books we can see him developing both his understanding of German culture and the formal means with which to convey this evolving vision. In *Occupations* (1969), for example, Kiefer arranged a series of photographs of himself in the *Seig Heil* salute. The locations for the salute—the Roman Coliseum is one, a rock overlooking the sea that recalls a Caspar David Friedrich painting is another—made an obvious comment on the vulgar pretensions of the Nazis to "occupy" European culture.

DESPITE ITS outrageous subject matter, *Occupations* remained a safe work of art. It was comfortably parodic. But Kiefer soon gave up the easy moral superiority created by a jokey or ironic point of view—perhaps his most radical decision as an artist. While retaining irony as an essential tool, he also edged closer to the Nazi evil, trying, in effect, to understand it from within. In a chilling book called *The Flooding of Heidelberg*, also from 1969, Kiefer portrayed an imaginary disaster seen from the vantage point of the person who created it. "I do not identify with Nero or Hitler," he said, "but I have to re-enact what they did just a little bit in order to understand the madness. That is why I make these attempts to become a fascist." If Kiefer entered the Nazi mind the better to understand it, he has done the same with the rest of the tainted German inheritance.

Kiefer's paintings from the 1970s are incantatory. They mingle real and mythical time and conjure up the specters of German history. One imagines the artist in his studio (the setting of many pictures of that period) inviting the specters, good and evil, to converse across time about the outcomes, the connections, the collisions. There is a feeling of danger, as if the sorcerer, playing with this material, might blow up the world. In *Germany's Spiritual Heroes* (1973), for instance, the artist portrays a huge empty room (actually his studio) built entirely of rough-grained wood. Perspective lines increase the sense of a vast space suitable for Wotan and his crowd; yet the grainy wood of the floor, ceiling, and wall makes the space seem almost claustrophobic. Beside each of the shallow bays that run along the sides of the room Kiefer has written a name (among them Wagner, Beuys, Musil, Frederick II, and Arnold Böcklin). Each bay also contains a burning torch, perhaps a memorial—or a match. At any moment, one expects this suffocating space, this empty room, to ignite.

In these paintings, the weight of the content sometimes overwhelms the art. The pictures often resemble self-conscious meaning puzzles, and the forms cannot always sustain the subject. The artist, moreover, is not a great draftsman: his crude drawing of faces is rarely more provocative than run-of-the-mill neoexpressionism. In the books, however, he continued to find ways to strengthen his work. He invested the formal devices of conceptual art, typically rather precious, with more and more power. The books became very big, no longer precious art books but volumes beautifully burdened, it seemed, with universal truths. The words written on books and paintings to identify places or people looked less like an intellectual game than a kind of runic calligraphy, which added a magical density to the work. The crisscross of meaning in narratives, while paying homage to the current structuralist belief that there are no truths, only interpretations, began to resemble something grander: a clash of eternally warring forces.

KIEFER EVENTUALLY became a master of symbol. Modernism has not had much use for symbol-making, of course, consigning it to the merely "literary," with no bearing on the serious manipulation of form, color, light. The latter may indeed determine whether a painting is worth looking at, but this does not mean that symbols cannot further enrich a formally vital work of art. A particularly powerful work, for example, is called *Cauterization of the Rural District of Buchen* (1975). It is nothing more, and nothing less, than a series of eight large, burnt books. In their evocation of Nazi book-burning, these ruins serve as a memorial for the destroyed word. It's a very moving memorial—a sacred-seeming book, outsized like an early Bible, recalling a time when the word *was* the world. Yet Kiefer has not settled for just the obvious references. He has "created" the pages by burning some of his own canvases; that is, he has not only linked his work to that outlawed by the Nazis, he has also offered a symbolic expiation.

The burning itself is not without appeal: an essential point. The black pages are visually seductive, in their way beautiful. One finds commemorated the power of natural forces over the efforts of men. One also discerns, in these pages, a dim hope. To cauterize is to help heal, and not simply in the grotesque Nazi sense of healing the body politic from the infection of evil ideas. Artists have often convulsively burned their own work so that something new might be born from the cleansing flames, as a forest fire restores essential nutrients to the forest. But the hope, I repeat, is dim.

KIEFER'S MOST important step was to bring the earth itself into his art. The common modernist device of adding material from the real world to the surface began to look like more than the familiar art-and-reality game. The straw, lead, and sand, while rich in symbolic meaning, imbued his Romantic imagination with the weight of ordinary life and lent a moral gravity—a memory of art's responsibility to the larger world—to the often effete art of the 1970s. His use of the literal became, in a fundamental sense, his "grounding." The sand or straw served as the ballast for his crazier fantasies. Such humble but powerful materials assumed the impress of experience, the gravity of facts; they came to represent the authority of history in a world of dreams. Sometimes they also represented the power of nature—a foil for the ordering designs of art. In the book *March Sand V* (1977), Kiefer has slowly, beautifully, covered the photographs of a landscape with actual sand; and the photograph itself, that modern construction of reality, turns into a kind of ruin, slowly repossessed by nature. Ages pass as the pages turn.

Not surprisingly, Kiefer added worldly materials to the canvas itself—most memorably, straw. For Germans the straw summons up one of the most Romantically charged of all ideas: *das Land*, the very heart of German nationalism. Kiefer's pictures recall such pivotal events as the destruction of an occupying Roman army, the long struggle to unify, Hitler's expansionist dreams, the postwar division into two Germanys.

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The straw evokes the humble soul of the country and the sweetly sentimental devotion of ordinary Germans no less than the august understanding of the land as a source of the sublime. In the straw paintings, Kiefer insists that one remember this idealized vision of the land. He writes evocative names on the pictures (referring for instance to Nuremberg, or to a fought-over region). In one picture he has added a lead wing to the canvas. He demands that one remember the ideal—and then he shows what happened. The pictures resemble muddy fields crushed by war. So history has dealt with hope.

With the exception of some early watercolors, Kiefer's straw paintings are muck brown, with hardly any bright painted color. This does not mean they are colorless, of course—the straw is very yellow—but it certainly deepens the aura of despair that emanates from the work. Color in an art of such Teutonic gravity would doubtless seem trite, like whistling in the dark. But the fields retain a cruel beauty. The organizers of the exhibit have put a close-up of *Nuremberg* (1982) on the cover of the catalog; a friend of mine, a partisan of the my-eight-year-old-could-do-it school, saw the cover and said, "That's pretty." It is a powerful art that can require the mind to hold in violent suspension such powerfully opposed feelings.

The formal underpinnings of the straw paintings fully support their symbolic weight. For example, Kiefer plays off shallow and deep space. The straw stuck on the surface confirms the flatness of the picture plane, while the high horizon and the perspective lines provide some illusion of depth. In Kiefer's mature art, every formal device also has metaphorical implications: the space in the straw paintings describes a spiritual condition. It is both expansive and claustrophobic (a signature feature of Kiefer's art). The high horizon line crowds out the sky and the muddy straw appears shoved in one's face—a grunt's-eye view. At the same time, one looks *down* on the straw, so the painting retains some memory of flight—a bird's-eye view.

With an artist of such ambition, the issue necessarily becomes one of sufficiency. Do the paintings have the density, the allusiveness, to sustain the subject? The greatest test is surely the Holocaust. Kiefer, characteristically, has ignored the usual warnings that the enormity of the crime makes all art presumptuous. I think his painting *Shulamite* (1983) treats the subject adequately, which is no mean accomplishment. Kiefer has understood that he needs help in approaching the subject. No artist who is not himself a survivor can pretend to look the crime full in the face: tact demands some indirection. Only the stature of myth can satisfy the need for symbolic scale, moreover, yet the application of a myth cannot seem artificial; it must certainly not dissolve the awful physical reality into portentous rumination. For help Kiefer turned to Paul Celan, the poet and survivor of a concentration camp, who committed suicide in 1970. Celan's poem "Death Fugue"—it was written in a camp and begins "Black milk of daybreak we drink it at sundown"—tells of a blue-eyed German guard who writes love letters to an idealized Aryan woman, "golden haired Margarete," while making the Jews work and dance for him, among them an archetypal Jewish woman called Shulamite. He finally kills the Jews. The poem ends: "your golden hair Margarete / your ashen hair Shulamite."

PALETTE WITH WINGS, 1981

In *Shulamite*, a black painting that glows with a light that cannot be reproduced, Kiefer has also used as a source the Nazi design for the Funeral Hall for the Great German Soldiers in the Berlin Hall of Soldiers. It's a bold appropriation. Instead of the august hall envisioned by the Nazis, however, he presents a fire-blackened and suffocating space. Seven candles burn at one end; the windows are covered in tarry black woodcuts. "By this metamorphosis," Rosenthal writes, "Kiefer has subverted the building's original public function and revealed the indecent secrets of the society that first built this monument." At the same time, Kiefer has created a fitting memorial. While reminiscent of an oven and a crypt, there is also something dignified, Eastern, mystical—and yes, Jewish—in this pained space.

Part of the picture's "sufficiency" derives from the knowledge that Kiefer does not make a crude caricature of Margarete. He renders her pain too: the faith in purity was, after all, another Nazi victim. In Kiefer the desire for purity registers at best as a kind of metaphysical pain—at worst, as the crime of "purifying" the population. The paintings about Margarete typically use straw to symbolize her golden hair. To render gold with straw is in itself poignant. Kiefer places the straw on the surface in a manner that suggests vulnerability, not just to fire but to scattering. Gold to straw, the ideal to the real: Kiefer is that modern alchemist, necessarily perverse, who must show how gold becomes base metal.

If gold can become base, however, perhaps base metal might yet become gold. While very black, Kiefer, who is obsessed with alchemy, is not the blackest of artists. The later Goya, for example, could stare him into a darker pit. Kiefer retains a judicious amount of hope—which is to say, a little. *Jerusalem* (1986), which glints with otherworldly promise, has one of the most beautiful surfaces in contemporary art—a scarred and magical terrain that seems to hold pain and promise in perfect equilibrium. A memorable Kiefer

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symbol is also the "palette with wings," a huge birdlike creature with a palette for a body. There are indications that Kiefer flirts with a Beuys-like faith in the social power of art.

This social faith in the alchemist-artist is potentially the weakest part of Kiefer's vision. To consider artists the saviors of the world is surely unlikely, self-regarding, and sentimental; indeed, the very history that burdens Kiefer has made it so. Adolf the opera lover, the failed architect, was himself a bad artist, after all, who hoped to transform, purify, and expand the German space. It would be more telling, in the light of history, to remain deeply skeptical of the social visions of even the best artists. The essential choice may not be good Beuys or bad Hitler, but whether or not to take seriously any big dreamer who talks of changing life itself. The cultivation of big dreams, whether in art or life, too easily slips into the transcendently inhuman.

In Europe, some consider Kiefer a neo-fascist, which is nonsense. Kiefer simply knows where anxiety hides, and he looks at it. He almost never fails to tabulate how much dreams have cost the world. Those heavy straw paintings, which hold the eye the way mud sucks in the feet, are responsibly dirty; whereas fascism is always clean. Unlike the Nazis, who revived everything big—Classical as well as Romantic—Kiefer does not make the big too large. His pictures are steeped in an afterlight; or, to change the metaphor, they enter the eye as the afterimage of German culture. As a result, his revival of the Romantic tradition is convincing.

Blessed with an unusually various mind, he has been able to encompass in his art the conflicts and irreconcilable differences, the necessary ambiguity, without which we could not otherwise tolerate his sense of scale. We accept the Romantic in Kiefer because he is also an expressionist, the idealist because he is also literal, the mythmaker because he also remembers history. It is surprising to find some of the old time religion in contemporary art, which has been so absorbed in either a hollow formalism or the narcissistic titillations of the self. To reach the ancient myths, we need only cross a burnt field.

Arthur Miller, America's connoisseur of guilt.

ALL MY SINS

BY DAVID DENBY

AFTER A DECADE or so of hard scribbling, failure, and obscurity, Arthur Miller triumphs on Broadway in 1947 with *All My Sons*. The moment has arrived; it is time for a new and grander project. As Miller recounts the episode in *Timebends*, his autobiography, he is crossing the Brooklyn Bridge into Manhattan, and he experiences a rapt vision, a swelling presentiment, a vastation almost:

> I knew that with *All My Sons* I had won a new freedom to create, and I would stand on a high point of the bridge's arch facing the wind from the ocean, trying to embrace a world larger than I had been able to conceive of until this time. If I had no subject, I had an indescribable feeling of a new form; it would be both infinitely compressed and expansive and leisurely, the story both strange and homely. It would be something never seen on any stage before. The very thinking of it filled me with sexual desire, with love for my wife and, incredibly, for all women at the same time. I began to think that true art must be an overflowing of love.

Should the reader grow merry imagining Arthur Miller sexually aroused by the prospect of writing *Death of a Salesman*, he is sternly rebuked by the next paragraph:

> I was striving toward a sensation of religious superreality that did not, however, depart the conditions of earth, a vision of avoidance of evil that would thrill even atheists and lead them "upward," and perhaps even shame priest and rabbi into realizing how their "spiritualizing" of raw life had made a trifle of religions.

America is a strange place. A career spent bucking the tides of Broadway commercialism leads a man to summon the divine afflatus in himself, and in such terms, without expectation of ridicule. For those, however, who regard *Salesman* not as a great play but as a doggedly sincere and affecting (all right, *very* affecting) minor work, Miller's self-memorialization is at once hilarious and oppressive. And the vision on the bridge is just the beginning; we are spared no incident of *Salesman*'s success.

As all the world knows, one of Willy Loman's root troubles is that in his life as a drummer "he don't put a bolt to a nut." His creator cannot be said to suffer from the same problem. Even after he had the specifics of the play in mind, Miller tells us, he couldn't begin its composition until he had built, with his own hands, a studio on his Connecticut property. There, amid the nourishing odors of raw wood and sawdust, he completes *Salesman*. Presented with the play, the actors, the director, the technicians, the audience are all overwhelmed; the opening night, on February 10, 1949, is a triumph.

But then, unimaginably, a spider alights on the wedding cake. The owner of the Morosco Theater, a certain Robert Dowling, throws a party for his friends right on the stage and fails to invite Miller and his wife. The sight of Dowling and the other swells sitting inside Willy Loman's shabby house reminds Miller of "scenes from Soviet movies of the last insensible days of the czarist court." The complaint grows in intensity, petulance rising to disbelieving anguish: "The pain and love and protest in my play could be transformed into mere champagne."

Here, as he does over and over in *Timebends*, Miller sounds a note of personal disappointment verging on outright betrayal—and an accompanying note of unconscious priggishness. America, he tells us, is crass, frivolous, buffoonish; America prefers entertainment to art (the two are always opposed), escapism to

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David Denby is the film critic for *New York* magazine.

Timebends
by Arthur Miller
(Grove Press, 594 pp., $24.95)

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self-confrontation, the politics of fantasy to the politics of reality. These charges, of course, are all partly true; it's the inevitable, repeated corollary—America does not value Arthur Miller as it should—that occasionally gives one pause. Reproach, and the high, indignant tones of Jeremiac lamentation, come readily to Miller. In *Timebends* he ranges over his careers as husband, public citizen, and Connecticut tree-planter, and he always returns, as he should, to his professional activity on the stage; and the clear implication of Miller's disgust is that America's declining interest in his later work is evidence of the country's increasing triviality and illiberalism. *Timebends* is his attempt to stake a permanent claim, and his brief against a country that has fallen away from him—and from liberal ideals.

It is a proud, haughty, often wrathful book, congruent in spirit with the familiar photographs taken of Miller by Inge Morath (his third wife), pictures usually unyielding in their fierce confrontation of subject and camera. Looking straight into the lens, Miller presses surprisingly thin, ascetic lips together; the large glasses sit heavily above a powerful nose from whose sides heavy folds lead straight down to the mouth, forming an intimidating triangle; the ears and the hands are large and thick—all traces of the engagingly gawky young man nuzzling Marilyn Monroe on the Amagansett beach have vanished. It is quintessentially the appearance of a public figure who demands not love but respect, a man irritably conscious of his position in the world and of others' dereliction in recognizing it. So large a claim on public dignity—uncharacteristic for an American artist—must have received, over the years, many an affront. Miller records that on an early date he took Monroe to a bookstore to buy her a copy of *Salesman*, only to witness a man, Chinese or Japanese, "staring at her from the next aisle while masturbating in his pants." Someone is always raining on his parade.

Miller cuts back and forth through time, reaching forward to the present in overlapping, majestically wavelike movements. No doubt he wanted to convey the irregular, shuttling movements of memory; he may have also wanted to create something comparable to *Salesman*'s "geologic" construction, in which all strata of Willy's mind were revealed at once. But of course a sprawlingly eventful life like Miller's cannot be easily manipulated in the telling. Structurally, *Timebends* is unwieldy and blockish, a failure. Miller doesn't have the dexterity at transition or the lightness of spirit to pull off a graceful, spontaneous form (as Malraux did in his unchronological *Anti-Memoirs*), and the whole book, composed in long, wandering, rather glutinous sentences, has an amorphous and sluggish feel to it. One doesn't want to punish Miller for boldness, but he may have miscalculated: the reader of an artist's autobiography naturally expects chronological order, if only to receive hints of the life's shadowy influence on the work. Miller has largely denied us that conventional (and admittedly philistine) pleasure without coming up with any literary advantage in its place.

Some of the brief portraits are vivid: the bald, effusive Spyros Skouras, chief of 20th Century-Fox, wooing Monroe and clumsily urging Miller to turn on the left and to name names before the House Un-American Activities Committee; Lucky Luciano, encountered in exile in Sicily, ravenous for news of New York; the vain, power-mad, acting teacher-Svengali, Lee Strasberg, showing up on the Nevada set of *The Misfits* in a brand-new Western getup of boots, braided shirt, creased pants. Extreme cases of egotism and self-interest impel Miller to superior descriptive effort. He's great at remark-

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ing signs of Willy Lomanism in others.

But these lively pages are exceptions. In general, the writing is marred, and sometimes destroyed, by outbreaks of rueful, village-elder sagacity and didacticism—the evident hand of a playwright squeezing incident for its bit of moral significance. Puffing on his pipe, Miller extracts the social truth from his visit to a whorehouse in postwar Rome without telling us if he slept with any of the girls. He lacks the vivacity and the curiosity of a novelist's (or ideal memoirist's) temperament. Except for some swipes at the Strasbergs, he can't bring himself to commit the enlivening sin of malice. (His remarks about the tormenting Norman Mailer are prim and feeble; a street kid with an active tongue could do better.) So Miller stands or falls as a moralist. From the plays we're familiar with his favorite paradox of fierce aspiration producing, by its very energy, bewilderment and defeat. His own life may have fulfilled that pattern.

BORN IN 1915, Miller lived as a young boy in the southern part of Harlem (just above Central Park), then a partly Jewish neighborhood. His immigrant father, sent from Poland at the age of six and never taught to read, was a successful coat manufacturer; his mother played the piano and had cultural ambitions for her son. Still, despite his mother's aspirations, there were few books in the house, or at friend's houses—an early lack that may have contributed to the dry, workmanlike drone of his style, the sound of prose laboriously mastered as a form of impressiveness, not reproduced as a running song in the author's head.

His family life was happy, but the impression we get of it, given Miller's fragmenting of the narrative, is frustratingly partial and undetailed. His older brother, Kermit, good-looking, a war hero, someone to defeat in competition, quickly fades out of the picture. So does the father, Isidore, the spectacle of whose power, stubbornness, and eventual failure would obviously contribute much to the dominating but finally hapless fathers in *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*. Isidore Miller lost his business and his fortune in the Depression. His son says he blamed him not for the business failure, which was also the failure of the whole system, but for an inability to recognize and then to cope with the dwindling of his personal resources. But Miller merely states his disappointment in passing, without describing its intensity. In all, the family portrait sits in an emotional vacuum, an odd reticence for a memoirist whose first two plays reproduce the situation of competitive brothers and overbearing father. The specific inspiration for Willy Loman may have come from an antic, boastful traveling salesman Miller knew slightly as a boy (a man on much easier terms with himself than Willy), but we get no clue where the anguish came from.

MILLER WORKED his way through the University of Michigan, where he won two Avery Hopwood Awards in playwriting. Back in New York, when not attempting to write plays (four or five full-length works before *All My Sons*), he earned his living grinding out material for the radio and working at routine jobs (the Brooklyn Navy Yard during the war). In Miller's memory of hard physical labor, there is no Dickensian indignation over the blacking factory. He likes blistering his hands. For him, physical labor is the groundrock not only of reality, but of spiritual striving. He records, with a straight face, that after the success of *All My Sons* he was so unnerved by sudden fame that he applied to the New York State Employment Service for any job available; before boredom brought him to his senses, he worked for a week assembling beer-box dividers at the minimum wage.

The spiritual pretensions inherent in such an act may be laughable (Miller's comparing himself to "Tolstoy at the height of his renown spending days in a Moscow shoe shop making shoes" doesn't help). But *Timebends* makes the emotional need for humbling clear enough. So many men of Miller's acquaintance had failed or died young during the Depression period that the successful playwright, some years later, could not avoid the tremors of guilt. Ideology also encouraged shame. Marxism had made a dominating impression on him as an adolescent, less as a mode of action than as a spirit of radical egalitarianism, a climate of fervency. Marxism was "a moral act of solidarity with all those who had failed in life."

This sense of American failure—of collapse, disaster, disillusion as the truth of the country's inner life—persisted into the prosperous years of the '50s and even after, and doubtless contributed to his sense in boom periods that the country had become "unreal." He associates the emotion of hope and the certainty of failure with the Depression; and finally one realizes he associates reality itself with the Depression.

IN A CONFECTIONERY society like ours, Miller insists, the artist must bring the members of the audience to a recognition of the hard facts about themselves, the facts they have labored (with so many inducements) to avoid. The artist, in this self-congratulatory view, dispels illusion and complacency, restores truth. When working on *All My Sons*, he wanted to produce "a play that would stand on the stage like a boulder—undeniable, a fact." Actually, it stands on the stage as an accusation, the first of many. Miller's characters, prisoners of debilitating lies or evasions, commonly suffer delusions about themselves, and in the course of the play they will be confronted, unmasked, or forced to make unbearable choices. In the nobly phrased speeches of *The Crucible*, and in the climactic passages of the other plays, one encounters the demand that life should have a certain moral stature: that men face dilemmas they can't walk away from, that they perform acts with irremediable consequences. If Miller could not confer a sense of tragedy on his audience, he at least conveyed a pained dignity. In a modern consumerist society, his sternness was accepted and applauded as an improving form of flattery.

Miller writes in the now-vanished Broadway genre of ethical melodrama. (Lillian Hellman was its other master.) This was a genre produced by the anger of the '30s, in which a sense of social injustice, fueled by vulgarized Freudian assumptions about "defenses" and methods of penetrating them, elevated the act of blaming to a new cultural prestige. There's heat in the clash of egos (he can raise the blood), but in many of his plays he's telling us things that we already know.

Miller, however, has an ironclad defense system. If a play fails to attract a large audience, that's because the critics and the audience were "denying" something. And how should the audience react if it doesn't deny Arthur Miller's power? Well, in *Incident at Vichy* (1964), Miller's hero, the French-Jewish army captain and doctor Leduc, argues so eloquently for "responsibility" that the Austrian aristocrat Von Berg takes Leduc's place in the train to Auschwitz. Which has to be the ultimate fantasy of a liberal playwright. In a truly serious world, *that* is the kind of effect a playwright would have on his audience.

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Miller is hardly blind to the moral dangers of accusation (from *The Crucible*: "Is the accuser always holy now?"), but his temperamental affinity for the act remains overwhelming. Inevitably (for he is not without a sense of justice), he wound up blaming himself. Throughout the disastrous confessional orgy *After the Fall* (1964), Quentin, the play's autobiographical hero, a sort of grindingly inclusive interlocutor, wanders through his life assigning guilt—to his wives, to the friend who blabs to the Committee, and (the heaviest burden) to himself. Quentin announces himself "bewildered by the death of love. And my responsibility for it." He moans questions that need never have been asked and that cannot be answered. "The question is whether you can ever hope to be innocent. Is it the proper aim in life?" "But why is the world so treacherous? Shall we lay it all to mothers?" And so on.

By the time Miller wrote *Timebends*, his vanity required not the maintenance of his own "innocence" but, on the contrary, a heavier and heavier assumption of responsibility. The book is filled with deep sighing over "the failure of love," self-accusations of unfeelingness, political impotence. But this inflation of one's own dismay is fatuous. To take so many burdens onto oneself is a kind of showing off.

AFTER THE FALL, of course, was written in the wake of his failed marriage to Marilyn Monroe, and in the wake of her death, and even now, recreating the events a quarter century later, he invariably sounds the higher note. One hesitates, of course, to instruct a man how to speak of a dead wife. But finally we modern readers are ruthless in our judgment of literary manners; we would demand humor and a sense of proportion from Ahab's memories of Jezebel. In brief, it seems never to have occurred to Miller that Monroe was a very great tease and he something of a blockhead. In *Timebends* he writes of the marriage as the ultimate test of responsibility. His tone is pained, eloquent, excruciating. Damaged and exploited, Marilyn had become, by the time he met her, pure need, pure sensitivity. She was "part queen, part waif"; she had "revolutionary idealism." She had come to symbolize "a kind of authenticity." Why? "Perhaps it was simply that when the sight of her made men disloyal and women angry with envy, the ordinary compromises of living seemed to trumpet their fraudulence and her very body was a white beam of truth."

Given Miller's long and happy marriage to Inge Morath, one can understand that he wouldn't care to write about a former wife, even *that* wife, in an openly sexual way. Let us grant as well that his love for Monroe was as tenderly solicitous of her dignity as he says: she had been mocked and insulted, he would raise her up. Miller may be pompous, but he's hardly a phony. What's missing from these earnest pages, however, is not merely sexual excitement, but any sense of a man flinging himself headlong into a pop myth. America's playwright, America's sex queen, the brain and the body.... The teasing newspaper raptures over a marriage so improbable, so metaphysically public, can't simply be ignored or dismissed.

Miller was mating with the golden-haired national dream, quite a feat for a Jewish boy who considered himself homely. Mustn't he have felt some gleam of exaltation? And feared the darts of envy lodging in his hide from the fantasies of half the men in America? (Norman Mailer is still throwing.) But in *Timebends* he writes of Monroe as a needy, beautiful person and of his love for her as a liberation from the hypocrisies of his first marriage. Deeply humorless, he still can't see that a man doesn't, or shouldn't, marry a "sex queen" in a fit of high-mindedness. Even now, he's enveloped in the dream that they might well have brought each other "salvation."

The disaster that followed has been recorded on stage, but the account here is fuller, and more deeply emotional—despite much evasion, the most reverberant writing in the book. Like so many performers, Marilyn Monroe needed constant reassurance. But given her terrible childhood and the constant derision she endured, the need, in her case, had become unappeasable. Miller propped her up faithfully, scrupulously, but he was the wrong man for the job. When she complained that her directors, Joshua Logan and Laurence Olivier, were trying to do her in, Miller could guess that it wasn't true, which landed him in a hopeless position. A man vain of his prowess as a truth-teller was now required to lie. And having encouraged the idea that she was a victim, he found himself trapped by her self-pity and self-contempt. For Marilyn, the catastrophe has a stern grandeur:

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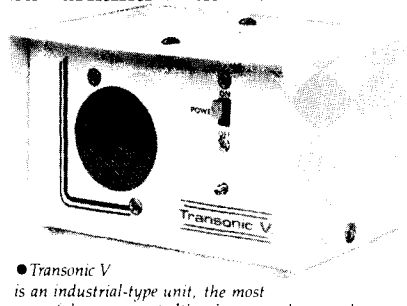

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> in the permanent rush of a crescendo was there safety, or at least forgetfulness, and when the wave dispersed, she would turn cruelly against herself, so worthless, the scum of the earth, and her vileness would not let her sleep, and then the pills began and the little suicides each night.

Miller's own defeat was smaller but wounding. When he realized he couldn't save her himself, and that he was defending an ideal of her innocence that neither of them believed, the marriage dissolved. During the years they were together, he wrote little or nothing.

WHAT A vexing man! Despite his love for Marilyn, the ultimate movie star, he can complain in his memoir that a few years later the United States was falling apart because "the impersonator of other human beings, the movie star, was the most envied, most celebrated, the best-paid person in the country and his triumph, a fabricated escape from the self, was apparently the goal of life." In American high-mindedness of this density, opposition to mass culture advertises itself as a form of honor. *Timebends* is strewn with Miller's contempt for "distraction." For what is entertainment but those familiar Millerian disasters, illusion and denial, writ large?

That such a view of American culture is inadequate, even vulgar, no longer requires argument. Miller's taste in movies may be comically awful (the only American films of the '30s he praises are the ones about the Depression or the Spanish Civil War) and more than negligent (what about an entertainer like Preston Sturges, whose vision of America was as fiercely critical as his own?). But ignorance of popular culture isn't the point, it is merely a symptom. What's scandalous is Miller's indifference to pleasure in art. ("Sensuality" is a key word for him, but "pleasure" goes virtually unmentioned.) The thematic and narrative lines of a work like *The Crucible* are as closely joined as the beams of a house, a feat of dramatic construction that allows for no gratuitous life, no *play*. Compare it, in this respect, with Shaw's *St. Joan*; in *The Crucible*, the scaffolding is all.

Though he hates popular culture, he does not, north or south of Shubert Alley, figure as a man of inquiring intellectual taste. He dismisses Beckett in terms worthy of Walter Kerr in a bad moment, and has nothing to say of Brecht, Pirandello, Jarry, or the rest of the classical avant-garde. The off-Broadway movement of the '60s he appears to regard as "coterie" art. Miller's goal has always been Broadway. In truth, Broadway was not a contemptible place in the period of Miller's first success. In the '40s, as he points out, there was a single theater audience that attended musicals and light entertainment and also Tennessee Williams, *The Cocktail Party*, The Old Vic, and his own plays. Later the audience split into groups, and the more demanding shipped out to other parts of town for its serious entertainment.

But Miller never accepted the split. The flops of the last 20 years have been issued in pursuit of the one big audience, which Miller wants to unify and to rouse. It is essentially the ambition of a man of action. Indeed, in saying that Miller is a victim of overweening moralism, one intends no derogation of his honorable and strenuous public role during the McCarthy period or as leader, during the '60s, of PEN International. Miller the citizen has sounder instincts than Miller the artist. *Timebends* suggests, however, that the two sets of impulses are derived from the same source. The man who fights for the right of self-expression everywhere is also the product of the morally aggrandizing popular-front polemics of 50 years ago.

He long ago renounced the Soviet Union, but he has never transcended the dreary left aesthetics of the '30s. In his book he is still yearning for an art that "could express the universality of human beings, their common emotions and ideas." To this end, he hid the obvious Jewishness of the Lomans and other characters, for "universality" requires the suppression of the particular, the material, the conditioned, a fallacy that strikes Americans of a certain ambition like a disease. In the woolliest, most abstract passages of *Timebends*, he is still pursuing the one-world Great Truths of 1937. But mourning his naïveté is useless. A man who had absorbed what, say, Lionel Trilling had to teach 40 years ago about literary "progressivism" might not have written social dramas at all. Reading the book, one understands that for Miller the dramatist certain kinds of knowledge and self-knowledge might be inhibiting and are therefore to be avoided.

MILLER WAS at his best during the '50s, facing down the clowns and the bullies of the American Legion and the House Un-American Activities Committee. His account of his own role at that time is modest and good-humored, his recollection of his feelings of alienation in the paranoid cold war years pained and quizzical. He could not then—and cannot now—believe that the country had fallen away so far and so quickly from the concerns, the collective enthusiasms, of the '30s. The new spirit of crass individualism and what's-in-it-for-me hurt him *personally*, and he never regained thereafter the sense that the country was his.

Even during the '60s he felt removed from the scene. The protesting students seemed to him merely stylish, engaged in the metaphysics of personal salvation more than political action. The mediaized flash of the period disgusted him. Reality itself became theatrical, and his dramatic method ran aground:

> In former time you had to bring the unconscious to the surface by the end of the third act, but we were already *in* the third act. I had seriously begun to question whether a play that gradually unveiled a submerged theme could ever be written again. . . . The fact was, we were too conscious, too aware that we were lying to ourselves in the matter of this [Vietnam] war, [and we] knew we were bartering away reality itself rather than face our national self-deception.

Thus there remained no role for the unmasker of liars and self-deceivers.

What can we say to Miller? Only that in so hedonistic and equivocating a country as the United States, where few issues ever seem to be framed, confronted, and settled decisively, an artist must operate in a different way—indirectly, using satire, stealth, and subterfuge. But he couldn't operate in that way.

IN THE WRITING about Miller by assistant professors of drama (a vast, alarming literature), and in the spells of worrying over him in the *New York Times*, one hears a note of national desperation, a fear that if Miller should not be great, then America has no major serious playwright after O'Neill. Miller has played on those fears; he almost taunts us with them. "Great drama should be great questions, or it is nothing but technique," he says here, a stupid remark that will never go out of fashion in the classroom, where "great questions" are always teachable. Miller is the perfect school playwright (far from the worst fate that could befall a writer). And as a citizenly artist, he is exemplary. In *Timebends*, he repeatedly describes himself as "afraid of being afraid." That is perhaps the proudest boast a non-violent man can make, but in thinking over his strenuous, confrontation-filled life, I see no reason to dispute it. □

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THE WORLD OF WORKERS

Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class by Herbert G. Gutman edited by Ira Berlin

(Pantheon, 452 pp., $29.95)

The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925 by David Montgomery

(Cambridge University Press, 494 pp., $27.95)

"Labor history," wrote Herbert Gutman in 1963, "had little to do with those matters scholars traditionally and excessively emphasize. Too few workers belonged to trade unions to make the unions important." Four years later, David Montgomery wrote: "Isolating [workers'] conflicts with employers from their other social activities artificially divorces their efforts from the mainstream of national development. Workers were not purely economic men but were in every sense members of their local and national communities, and it is in this setting that their efforts to improve their lot should be studied."

Those were among the first statements of the premises of the "new labor history," which, like other "new" histories, emerged in the 1960s and soon seemed to sweep all before it. Earlier historians interested in American workers had written largely about unions and labor leaders. The new generation of scholars was less interested in institutions than in the cultures and the communities in which working-class people lived. The older scholarship, rooted in the "consensus" assumptions of the 1950s, dismissed much working-class protest as romantic anti-industrialism, and portrayed the modern union movement as a successful resolution of labor's problems. The new labor historians saw dissent as the expression of a coherent alternative value system, which competed strenuously (if often unsuccessfully) with the acquisitive individualism of capitalist culture.

The growth of the new labor history in America reflected to a striking degree the influence of two pioneers, Gutman and Montgomery. Their scholarship raised the questions and established the premises that guided the new history through its first generation. They were also gifted, generous teachers and mentors who helped produce among labor historians something missing in many other areas of scholarship: a sense of community, a shared excitement in the creation of a genuinely new approach to the past. But nothing can remain new forever, and the new labor scholarship is now reaching an uneasy maturity. The new historians are no longer the challengers, attempting to unseat an established orthodoxy. They have become the mainstream. Like restive scholars in other fields, they are calling now for synthesis: for pulling together the diverse work in their own discipline and for forging connections with the concerns of historians outside it.

Herbert Gutman was among those calling for a synthesis of the "new histories," for efforts to "pull it all together and see how it makes our politics—our national experience—look different." He died in 1985, before he could provide a response to his own challenge. But *Power and Culture*, a collection of essays posthumously compiled by his friend Ira Berlin, suggests something of what Gutman may have had in mind. It is a motley collection. Gutman himself never intended these essays to be published together. Some he probably never intended to be published at all. Most of the articles have appeared before. Others are discarded chapters from, or afterthoughts to, earlier work. The previously unpublished material consists largely of very early efforts. This is not, therefore, a genuinely representative sampling of his scholarship.

Still, *Power and Culture* is a rich and rewarding book, thanks in part to the long introduction by Berlin, which supplies the coherent overview of Gutman's work that the essays themselves do not. It is part biography, part critical (if largely appreciative) analysis of Gutman's scholarship. And it attempts to refute one of the chief criticisms of Gutman's work: that his concern with working-class culture (the family, the community, religion, personal values) led him to neglect questions of power (economic relationships, conflicts in the workplace, class struggle); that there was a certain "softness" and "romanticism" in his work.

Not so, Berlin insists. Gutman considered the study of working-class culture inseparable from the study of power. Yet these essays do not in the end fully support Berlin's claims (or the pointed title he has chosen for this volume). They suggest, rather, that conflict and control of the workplace—the supposedly "hard" issues of labor history—were central to Gutman's early work; but that over the course of his career he focused increasingly on cultural issues that, as he developed them, did not always leave much room for questions of power.

Gutman's early scholarship did indeed focus directly on the nature of political and economic power. The scholarship of the 1950s offered a picture of late-19th-century America in which industrialists and "robber barons" dominated their world, leaving other groups virtually impotent. Gutman's own research, however, produced evidence of substantial working-class strength. His studies of labor in the industrializing Midwest (some included in this volume) revealed the frequency and intensity of open struggle between workers and industrialists, struggle in which power did not all lie on one side.

But Gutman was not long content with the study of economic conflict alone. Even in his first articles, he argued that workers derived their identities not just from their productive functions, but from their cultures. By the end of the 1960s, the nature of those cultures was coming to dominate his concerns. He did not entirely abandon his interest in the workplace. His most celebrated essay, "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America" (published in 1973 and not included here), contained a series of remarkable portraits of shopfloors in the textile, steel, shoe, cigar, and other industries. But even there, his focus was less on battles for control than on the character of workers' lives. From E. P. Thompson, Gutman acquired a deepened appreciation of the importance of preindustrial values and habits among first-generation factory workers; and in his own work he demonstrated how such cultural legacies traveled from one

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generation to the next, constantly challenged by the pressures of the industrial world, but also constantly reinforced by the successive waves of immigrants who replenished the American work force in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

GUTMAN WAS also turning his attention to a subject not often considered part of labor history: slavery. In 1976 he published *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*. (An essay on black schools after Emancipation, dropped from the book before publication, appears here for the first time.) Gutman's studies of black culture became an important part of the new scholarship on slavery. But they also revealed perhaps more clearly than anything else he wrote the assumptions that were coming to govern his treatment of the working class as a whole. In his exploration of the black family, Gutman suggested for the first time that a working-class culture could be something largely separate from the workplace, indeed something almost autonomous. Southern agricultural laborers, he insisted, were as much a part of the working class as steelworkers, miners, and textile operatives. Even more than Northern workers, they faced powerful challenges to their cultural independence. Yet despite such obstacles, black workers (like white workers) sustained, through the family, a vital, independent culture that made them not simply victims, but a class.

His book was not, Gutman said in an interview reprinted in this volume, "about the family as such." Instead, it showed "how the slaves could transmit and develop their own experiences and general beliefs across generations and over time." It was an examination of "the passageways through which class and cultural belief could travel," passageways that existed almost entirely independently of white masters and rulers. The survival of the black family in the face of overwhelming assaults, and perhaps more important the very different form the black family took from its white counterpart, was evidence of the ability of even the most exploited workers to retain a coherent sense of themselves as a class.

This insistence on the autonomy of the black family mirrored an assumption about the working class as a whole. Battles for power, Gutman often seemed to suggest, were confined largely to the workplace. The creation of a working-class culture occurred largely apart from those battles. Critics (Eugene Genovese most prominently among them) have argued that the struggle for power between classes extended into the community, into the family, into the culture, and is central to an understanding of them. But the body of Gutman's work (with the possible exception of a few very late essays) suggests that when he called for a synthesis of labor history, he was thinking of an approach in which the factory and the field would stand to some degree apart from a much larger mosaic of cultural experiences that determined how a working class defined and sustained itself.

WHEN David Montgomery began writing labor history in the early 1960s, his perspective was in some respects almost indistinguishable from Gutman's. While Gutman's scholarship moved gradually away from the factory and toward the family and the community, however, Montgomery's did not. The battle for control of the workplace remained his central concern (a reflection, perhaps, of his own experience in the 1950s as a machinist and a union organizer).

Like Gutman, Montgomery has called for a new synthesis of labor history, and in his new book he has taken a large step toward providing it. *The Fall of the House of Labor* examines the 60-year period following the Civil War when, Montgomery argues, a prolonged crisis in industrial capitalism first aroused, and then crushed, a powerful labor movement. In doing so, this book offers the most sweeping portrait of working-class life yet to emerge from the new labor history. It is a subtle, complex, often brilliant study, which demonstrates how far labor scholarship has moved in a generation.

What most clearly differentiates Montgomery's book from the monographic local studies that have for so long dominated the field is his effort to draw together the experiences of many labor communities and to link them to the development of the industrial economy as a whole. Crucial to that development, he argues, were the long deflationary crisis that began in the 1870s and climaxed, disastrously, in the depression of the 1890s, and the subsequent imposition on the workplace by industrialists allied with the state of a new "scientific" pattern of labor relations that all but destroyed the independent work cultures American laborers had built.

Montgomery's best sections are his painstaking re-creations of the world of working men and women as it existed before the transformations of the early 20th century, a world most clearly visible among skilled craft workers. Few things were more important to such workers than control of their own labor, he explains; and for a time in the late 19th century they were highly successful in defending that control. Even when employed by powerful industrialists, skilled craftsmen were often able to create something that more closely resembled the independent shops of an earlier time than the disciplined factories of the 20th century. They set their own hours, they determined wage rates among themselves, they hired and trained assistants in something like the preindustrial apprenticeship system.

Along with autonomous work patterns there emerged a distinctive ethical code, one that "clashed at many points with . . . the strictures of acquisitive individualism." Montgomery argued for the existence of such a code in his first book, *Beyond Equality*, in which he examined the challenge raised by Northern industrial workers to the bourgeois ethic of radical Republicans during Reconstruction. He extends that argument here. Craft workers created an independent definition of "a reasonable day's work," and through their unions developed their own rules to protect it—rules "not negotiated with the employers but unilaterally adopted by the workers" and based on a highly developed sense of their common interests. But the code of the workplace went beyond particular regulations. It emphasized the importance of "brotherhood," the dignity of labor, and the value of collective resistance. It cultivated "a mutualistic ethic and a movement culture."

THE LIVES of what Montgomery calls "common laborers" were in many respects entirely unlike those of the skilled craftsmen. These were workers who offered not skills but "muscle power," who wielded shovels and pushed wheelbarrows, who were known condescendingly as "ditchdiggers." They rarely managed to form durable unions. They had little security of employment and little power over the workplace. They received virtually no respect. That was in part because in the years after the Civil War they were drawn almost exclusively from the most despised elements of the population—blacks and recent immigrants (especially Irish, Ital-

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ians, and Chinese)—and thus had to endure not only contempt for their thankless work, but also racism and nativism.

Montgomery's masterful portrait of their world moves him into an area relatively few labor historians have considered. One of his goals is to rescue these men from obscurity, to portray them as people responsible for America's "most spectacular feats of engineering—the railroads, dams, subway tunnels, and sewer systems," and hence worthy of dignity and respect. But his aim is also to reveal that they too managed to create a distinctive culture for themselves. Some laborers (most notably dockworkers) formed effective unions. Even the weakest and least successful created "intimate work groups"—usually reinforced by ethnic and familial bonds—that helped them withstand prejudice and intimidation.

FACTORY "operatives," men and women who performed routinized tasks in textile mills or shoe factories, inhabited still another workers' world. Operatives were not, despite the usual nomenclature, "unskilled," or even "semiskilled," laborers. Their work required significant talent, and they took substantial pride in it. But they faced a number of serious obstacles in the battle for control of their work. They were overwhelmingly young, and often viewed factory employment as a momentary interval before returning to the farm. Many (in some industries most) factory operatives were women, and gender discrimination helped ensure that their wage scales remained low whatever their level of skill and accomplishment. They lacked the "training and traditions" that enabled craft workers to exercise control over their working conditions. They lacked the mobility that permitted common laborers to escape from intolerable situations.

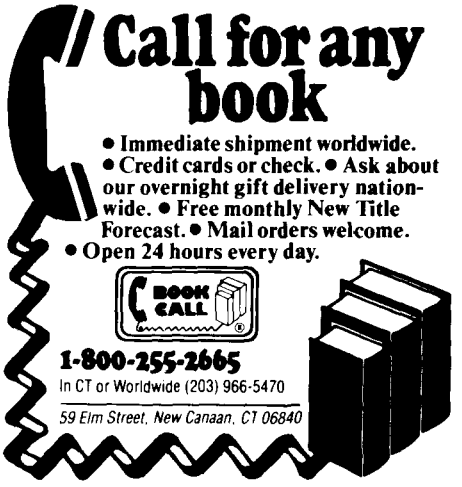
But factory operatives, too, developed significant solidarity and class consciousness. Indeed, in the mid- and late 19th century, they mobilized frequently, at times violently, to resist the efforts of employers to streamline the workplace and to reduce wage costs. The feminization of the factory, in particular, often created a strong sense of community among women workers, "codes of bonding and individual conduct" that helped them sustain a sense of common interest, and occasionally enabled them to organize and to strike.

In the late 19th century, industrial capitalists set out to shatter these independent workers' worlds. Acting at times in alliance with the state, employers moved to win decisive control over the labor force, to make it more "efficient" and "productive," which usually meant less expensive and troublesome. Craft workers faced the creation of new technologies that made many of their skills obsolete. Common laborers encountered legalized racial discrimination and other statutory regulations that limited their power and mobility. And factory operatives encountered what Montgomery considers the most powerful and disastrous threat of all: scientific management, often known as "Taylorism," after its principal theorist, Frederick Winslow Taylor.

MONTGOMERY may make too much of the influence of "scientific management," a theory that had direct influence on only a relatively few (if large and important) factories. But it is a useful metaphor for the larger effort by employers in many industries to seize control of the shopfloor. Taylorism, Montgomery argues, was a direct assault on independent work cultures, which industrialists equated with inefficiency. Into the workplace came legions of engineers, scientists, consultants, and trained managers, who redesigned the shopfloor, rewrote work rules, and (when they could) destroyed unions and enfeebled labor leaders. The "essence" of Taylorism, Montgomery claims, "was systematic separation of the mental component of commodity production from the manual. The functions of thinking and deciding were what management sought to wrest from the worker, so that the manual efforts of wage earners might be directed in detail by a 'superior intelligence.'"

The effort to "rationalize" the workplace met fervent resistance from skilled and unskilled workers alike. It produced an era of unprecedented labor militancy and conflicts. But the inability of labor to overcome its internal divisions "continued to produce a plethora of attitudes and interests in working people's everyday encounters with one another." The failure to unite, combined with the strength of the assault from above, doomed the incipient labor movement to failure. By the early 20th century the battle was in effect already lost.

Organizations committed to genuine labor solidarity were in disarray. The dominant organizations were the timid American Federation of Labor unions—wary of conflict, fiercely protective of the few privileges their elite memberships managed to retain, seldom willing to raise any fundamental challenge to the new industrial order. World War I briefly enhanced the power of trade unions by bringing the power of the federal government to bear on workplace relationships. But during the 1920s, when the state withdrew, the victory of employers was nearly complete. A last surge of labor militancy in 1922 ended in failure, leaving a legacy of "beleaguered unions clinging to minority sectors of their industries, surrounded by a hostile open-shop environment and governed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by ruthless suppression of dissent within their own ranks."

In many ways the story that Montgomery recounts is the same one that the "old" labor history told: the story of the shopfloor, of the unions, of the battles between capitalists and laborers, of the changes in the political underpinnings of the labor market. But he reveals a complex workplace culture and a level of working-class strength that earlier historians had not detected. He offers a fundamentally different assessment of the result of the struggles. In form, at least, this book is more reminiscent of traditional "narratives" than of the ambitious, interdisciplinary, cultural syntheses that so many historians now demand but so few manage to produce. It suggests both the resilience of the narrative and its adaptability to the concerns of new scholarship. It also suggests how different Montgomery's notion of synthesis is from Gutman's.

THESE BOOKS, for all their differences, have several things in common. Both reveal the richness of the new labor history and the extent of its achievement to date. But both also convey, for very different reasons, a sense of finality. Herbert Gutman's sudden death cut short a brilliant career, and so this volume in a very literal sense closes an important chapter in American scholarship. But David Montgomery seems also to have arrived at the end of at least one phase of his scholarly life. His very success in elevating the issue of workers' control to the center of the scholarly agenda has stimulated so much important scholarship (most of it reflected in this volume) that this synthesis appears almost to draw the story to a close.

Sudden bursts of new scholarship do not always sustain themselves for long. American slavery, for example, enjoyed unprecedented attention in the 1970s; today it attracts relatively little academic interest. But labor history seems unlikely to experience any similar hiatus. Already there are signs of movement beyond the initial concerns of the new scholarship. An important body of work is emerging, for example, on labor history in the 1930s and beyond—a period that "new" labor scholars have until recently tended to shun, but one so different from earlier eras that it will inevitably produce its own questions.

Perhaps, too, labor history might start to display a somewhat greater ideological diversity than it has in recent years, and attract historians willing to challenge some of the premises that most younger scholars now share. In Britain a new labor history emerged in large part out of a ferocious debate with economists and others over the material impact of industrialization on the condition of the working class—what became known as the "standard-of-living controversy." No comparable controversy has arisen among American labor historians. What effect did industrialization have on the material well-being of American workers? What difference would it make to our view of labor history if it could be shown that the decline of "workers' control" was accompanied by a rise in their standard of living? The new labor historians, perhaps as part of their rebellion against the earlier domination of their field by economists, have been largely uninterested in such questions. They seem generally to be in happy accord that large-scale industrialization served chiefly to weaken American workers and devalue their lives.

That Gutman and Montgomery were able so thoroughly to dominate American labor history for a generation is a testament to their talents as teachers and scholars. But it is also a testament to the close-knit, almost communal character of their field. Now that the new labor history seems to be reaching maturity, perhaps it is time for the field to display more of the diversity and the disagreement it has so successfully revealed in the lives of its subjects.

ALAN BRINKLEY

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HOUSE OF GAMES

Life: A User's Manual by Georges Perec translated by David Bellos

(David R. Godine, 581 pp., $24.95)

OuLiPo is not, as you might at first think, a cry of amatory pleasure directed at the great eighth-century Chinese poet. It is the acronym for the French *Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle*, or Workshop for Potential Literature. Founded in France in 1960 by Raymond Queneau and the mathematician François Le Lionnais, the group came to include Harry Matthews, Jacques Roubaud, Italo Calvino (marginally), and the late Georges Perec. Its professed purpose was twofold: to explore and to document the history of various uses of formal constraint in literature, and to devise new possibilities.

The underlying assumption is simple: that customary procedures within genres tend to ossify and become automatic; that a well-conceived formal limitation can force the creator to break new ground. Perec, who came to *OuLiPo* in 1967, found that this playful new mode allowed him to overcome a long-standing writer's block. From that time until his death from cancer in 1982 (he was 46), he was a model group member. He wrote one novel, *La Disparition*, using the ancient strategy of the lipogram, or letter elimination; he forbade himself the vowel "E." Other feats followed. A novel, for instance, using *only* the vowel "E." But he reserved his greatest artistry for *La Vie mode d'emploi* (now translated as *Life: A User's Manual*), which is sure to stand as one of the great literary anomalies of our time—an experimental work that is a pleasure to read.

Life: A User's Manual is the elegant product of several rather unusual constraining conceptions. To begin with, we are invited to regard the whole work as the verbal transcription of an enormous visionary painting undertaken by an aging artist named Serge Valène. Valène has lived in the same Parisian apartment block for the past 55 years. He has conceived a Saul Steinbergesque—or, if you will, Simultaneist—work that would capture, from a single vantage point, the lives and surroundings of all of the building's residents at a given time, the evening of June 23, 1975. Every law of perspective has been violated: each inte-

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rior is seen frontally, in great detail, as if a god were peering in through a transparent wall.

Perec has, further, arranged his novel so that there are 99 chapters, plus an epilogue. One hundred narrative units, then, that have been set up as a Greco-Latin square of ten, that is, ten by ten. The *OuLiPo*-ean constraint is that we should cover every square by following the forking move of the chess knight. The reader need not know any of this—the hobbles are there mainly to guide the author's hand.

THE READER'S progress from room to room, into the depths of this old building, is at every step a temporal as well as a spatial movement. We are made privy to every last visual detail of what is there before us:

> Madame Marcia is in her bedroom. She is a woman of sixty or so, tough, broad, and bony. Half-undressed, wearing a white lace-edged slip, a girdle, and stockings, and with her hair in curlers, she is sitting in a modern-made moulded wooden armchair upholstered in black leather. In her right hand she is holding a large barrel-shaped glass jar full of pickled gherkins and is trying to get hold of one between the index and medius fingers of her left hand.

Perec delights in precise description of this sort, here and everywhere. He goes on and on, sometimes covering pages, bringing scrupulosity to the edge of comedy. And often enough, as in the image of Madame Marcia struggling to get hold of the gherkin, he steps right over.

But then there is the other—the temporal, or narrative—aspect. A quick flip to the back of the book reveals that Perec has included not only a comprehensive index of proper names (unheard of in a novel!), but a no less comprehensive chronology of principal dates in his characters' lives and, most unconventionally of all, an "Alphabetical Checklist of Some of the Stories Narrated in this Manual." A random sampling of these might yield: The Tale of the Actor who faked his own death, The Tale of Freischutz the Dachshund, The Tale of the Overweight Girl and her mast, The Tale of the Jazzman who was never satisfied, The Tale of the Designer who had to dismantle the kitchen he was so proud of, The Word-Snuffer's Tale, and so on. The list is as inventive and entertaining as any of the inventories in Rabelais, and the matching tales—one per chapter, more or less—make up a modern day *Arabian Nights*.

Picking from this list quite at random, let's follow up The Tale of the Overweight Girl and her mast. The checklist sends us to Chapter 40, which is entitled "Beaumont, 4"—meaning that this is the fourth account thus far about a member of the Beaumont family. As the chapter opens, we find ourselves looking in on an eclectically appointed bathroom. The description picks out the main features, then comes to focus on "a green satin dressing gown with a cat silhouette and the symbol designating spades at cards embroidered on its back." The gown, we learn, has a colorful—though possibly apocryphal—history, having once belonged to a black boxer named Cat Spade, who was the reputed lover of the grandmother of Anna Breidel (Beaumont). It is Anna who we now see lying on the floor beside the bathtub. "She is wearing a white buckram nightdress pulled halfway up her back; on her stretchmarked buttocks there lies an electrical thermal massage vibrator, about fifteen inches in diameter, covered in a red plastic material."

Anna, it seems, has a weight problem. She works on herself daily with the vibrator cushion, at the same time studying a brochure entitled *Complete Table of Energy Values of Customary Foods*. There follows an itemized list of the caloric contents of the various foods that Anna consumed the previous day. We have scarcely digested this information, however, before we learn that Anna also does a good deal of between-meal snacking (representative items listed) that she does not log in.

Then the narration shifts. "In 1967," writes Perec, "at the age of nine, Anna discovered her vocation to be an engineer." The girl had read in a newspaper that a Panamanian tanker, the *Silver Glen of Alva*, had capsized off Tierra del Fuego, and that her crew had perished. Some claimed that the loss of life could have been averted if there had been receiving aerials with the power to pick up the ship's maydays. Anna thereupon became obsessed with the desire to build the world's largest radio beacon. For the next five years she spent every minute of her spare time drawing, calculating, and so on. "Her taste for the physical and mathematical sciences grew out of this mythical image of a fusiform mast piercing the freezing fog of the Indian Ocean." But then, quite anticlimactically, the growth of satellite telecommunications as well as her own need to study for college exams "finally got the better of her project." End of tale.

Well, nobody said that all of the stories were going to be show-stoppers. There is, rather, a dazzling variety. Scandal, violence, and mystery alternate regularly with drolly commonplace tellings. The procedure, though, is well illustrated by the Anna example. So many of the chapters begin with precise and neutral visual detailings, which then open out into histories of an object or person. These too are recounted in cool, neutral tones. What's more, few of the tales connect; the majority are taken up

POEM BEGINNING IN THE BED OF MY MOTHER AND FATHER

If I am the wedge
I am also the pillow
between them, there
in the crack where the beds

come together. Perhaps
even then I think
I can join them
like the piece of flesh

between Siamese twins.
Perhaps when I'm not there
he is holding her
from in back, like the two

waves, the dark and light
of a Chinese symbol.
Or maybe they're
back to back

as helpless as any
instruments
of torture—
but right now, the sun

comes in, leafy and sweet
as it is in winter, in the morning.
It is perfectly safe
to look into

the two faces—
and no, I am not them
the "no" and the "I" tell me,
and yet I am sinking into them

like butter.
Disappearing into
the softness between them.
Maybe that's what we look for

our whole lives: the absolute
separateness,
at the very moment
we disappear into each other.

JUDITH BERKE

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and then abandoned forever. By intention, the kaleidoscopic narrative does not add up to a sum greater than the assembled parts. On the page, as in life, individuals are granted their simultaneous, yet essentially separate, orbits.

What results is a most intricately imbricated hybrid, a work neither wholly visual nor wholly narrative. And this is the place to remark yet another of Perec's subtle structural feats: that the final forking knight's move lands the reader in Valène's studio, positioning him before what turns out to be a near-empty canvas (a spoof, clearly, of Balzac's "The Unknown Masterpiece"). But we are more enlightened than confused by this sudden turn. For when we realize that Valène has not actually been filling in the visual specifics, but merely surveying them in the mind's eye, then we understand the easy narrative transitions from precise descriptions of three-dimensional objects and surfaces to the fourth dimension of a story-telling. The novel, we grasp, has been unfolding as a reverie inside the mind of a dying artist. Everything that Valène has seen, heard, remembered, imagined, and read fuses together as he surveys the apartment boxes that he has sketched on his canvas.

PEREC'S SENSIBILITY delighted in the exercise of what others might consider gratuitous complexity. He was a formalist with a Rube Goldberg bent—except that behind his play lurked a metaphysics. His implementation of the jigsaw puzzle saga is a case in point.

One of the building's residents is Percival Bartlebooth, an eccentric English millionaire. Bartlebooth is also, though he does not write, a paradigmatic *OuLiPo*-ean. He decides, while still a young man, to confer order on a life perceived to be meaningless: he will execute an intricate—indeed, all-consuming—project, which will itself be meaningless. For ten years, then, he studies the art of watercolor with a still youthful Serge Valène. When he has gained the requisite competence, he sets off with his manservant on a 20-year voyage. The goal is to paint 500 different harbor vistas.

The finished aquarelles are sent to the puzzle-maker, Gaspard Winckler, who (you guessed it) also lives in the building. Winckler fashions from each "artwork" a difficult puzzle and stores it away. When his scenic safari is over, Bartlebooth returns to devote himself to reassembling, in order, the painted puzzles. The finished works are then glued together according to a special process (which erases the contour markings), the paper is removed, and the restored watercolor is sent off to the original site of execution. There, a hired agent uses a secret chemical to divest the paper of all tints. The blank sheet is mailed back to Bartlebooth.

A perfect zero-sum operation—at least in the artistic sphere. But not, alas, in the human sphere, where time and fallibility hold sway. The sheets may be restored to their original whiteness, but there is no restoration of the artist himself. Bartlebooth moves further and further into senile decrepitude. He cannot keep to schedule. Even at the moment of death—he has 61 unfinished puzzles waiting—he cannot get the last piece in his hand to fit into the last blank space of the puzzle in front of him.

Perec is playing a double game. He is having his richly confected cake and eating it too. On the one hand, he has achieved a kind of apotheosis of formal inventiveness, both beguiling and, in a curious way, profound. For while there is nothing intrinsically deep or meaningful about the subtly concealed limitations that he has put on his practice (they are as arbitrary as they are rigid), they make us feel that the work, like the engine of a DC-10 or the world banking system, will forever exceed our complete comprehension. We accept that, and we submit to it as to a fate. The profundity, then, derives not from a surplus of meaning, but from what appears to us as a transcendent structural intricacy.

But there is, again, the other hand. While indulging his *OuLiPo*-ean pyrotechnics, Perec can also see their limitations. And by concluding with the ultimate failure of Bartlebooth's stratagem, he administers a sly elbow-poke at his own enterprise. The move is at once serious and comical. Though it looks like a well-timed absurdist pratfall, and evokes a smile or a shake of the head, it is also Perec's way of articulating the paradox at the heart of *OuLiPo* and, by extension, of all hyperaesthetic undertakings: that structures, however clever and inclusive, and however productive of new arrangements and new angles of regard, always break down before the entropic chaos of real life. Like the jewelled bird in Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium," they serve to keep us drowsing emperors awake, and they attend and refresh whatever insomnias may afflict us. But even at the height of their crafted complexity, they cannot fend off or cancel the relentless momentum of time. We are asked to consider both the beauty of the artifact and the sublimated need that underlay its making. Every formal pleasure wears some nimbus of sadness. With that last recognition, Perec completes his own puzzle; he turns a construction of dazzling design into true art.

SVEN BIRKERTS

Sven Birkerts has recently published *An Artificial Wilderness: Essays on Twentieth-Century Literature* (Morrow).

LEAVE IT TO DEAVER

Behind the Scenes
by Michael K. Deaver with Mickey Herskowitz

(Morrow, 272 pp., $17.95)

What does a lackey get out of lackeying? Not enough, Michael Deaver clearly thought, decade by decade, as he kept the body. He kept moving the body from sumptuous setting to sumptuous setting. Money was all around; cash sluiced him down every day; but writhe as he would to be at the proper angle, none would catch in any of his pockets. It was like an evil magic for him; he was dry in the middle of a rainstorm. He could not wait to get wet—so he didn't.

The circle he moved in was Nancy's, one of monied privilege, where "our kind" are above the law:

> Not many people knew how close she was to the writer Truman Capote. They met through Jerry Zipkin, a lifelong bachelor and New York society figure. A year or two before his death, Capote was arrested in Anaheim on a charge of disorderly conduct. Nancy called me at home

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and begged me to get him out of jail.

I asked her what he had done.

"I don't know," she said, "but you must get him out. It will kill him."

The fear and compassion in her voice were unmistakable. She could not abide the thought of this frail, lisping little man in a jail cell. I called Ed Meese, and he arranged for Capote's release.

Meese, the law-and-order man, who says that people who get arrested are obviously criminal, knows that law does not apply to "our sort." If pardons for North, Poindexter, and Deaver himself are not forthcoming, it will only be because they could not be so quietly arranged as Capote's release.

Deaver confirms right-wing fears about the effectiveness of White House "moderates"—Jim Baker, Deaver, and Nancy—in purging the believers in the evil empire: Allen, Haig, Clark, Regan. Deaver and Nancy had more important things to think of than the spread of Marxism-Leninism:

My biggest irritation was his [Reagan's] insistence on using Brylcreem. Yeah, exactly. He would put a little dab of it in the palm of his hand and rub it into his scalp. And he had a habit, before each press conference, of slapping water on his hair. I begged him, "Governor, some people don't use that much water when they shampoo."

It was not until 1983 that Nancy and I finally got him off the Wet Look, the Brylcreem and water program.

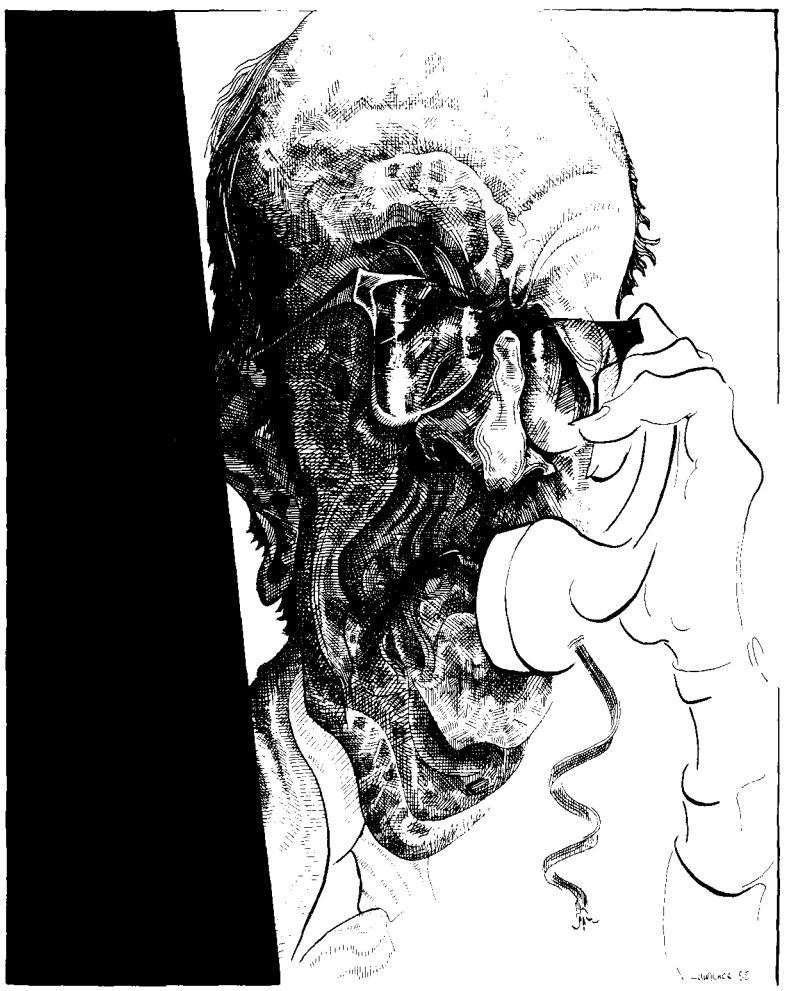
Nancy's and Mike's campaign tactics were much the same in nudging Reagan toward a summit, or away from the gauche manner of Al Haig. Sometimes they could use omens to steer their charge in the proper direction. Deaver records that one of the photo backgrounds considered for a Reagan trip to Europe was the Shrine of Fatima, site of mystical appearances. "Ronald Reagan is nuts for religious phenomena. He reads whatever he gets his hands on, watches any movie or television show that deals with the subject." This is a theme that Deaver turns to several times: Reagan is "incurably superstitious. If he emptied his pants pocket you would always find about five good-luck charms that people had sent him. I am sure he reads his horoscope every day":

Ronald Reagan does not laugh off paranormal phenomena. I no longer recall why, but we were chatting on the subject of superstitions one day in the residence. Abruptly, he said: "All my life I have had a recurring dream, that I lived in a house with high ceilings. I never knew what it meant. But I read somewhere that the Lincoln bedroom is haunted. Every once in a while, I'll find Rex [his dog] running down the hall and barking at the door of the Lincoln room."

I waited for him to go on, and when he didn't I said, "Well . . ."

The president said, unsmiling, "Well it must be Lincoln's ghost he's barking at." I believe he was quite serious.

No wonder that "Nancy and I became a team, united by our shared belief that Ron needed to be protected, whether he wanted it or not." The way to manage him was not by head-on argument, as Nancy found out in her repeated efforts to stop him from going to Bitburg. "She may push to a point where he slams a table with his hand, or throws down a fountain pen, but I doubt that they have ever exchanged the really ugly words not uncommon to most marriages. . . . In this case [Bitburg], it ended when the president said: 'Nancy, I simply don't believe you're right and I'm not going to change my mind.' She pressed him no further."



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

No, it was better to get him to think of the desired action as part of a movie he played in. When he hesitated to break the 11th Commandment by challenging a sitting Republican president in 1976, the day was won when Deaver heard him say: "I remember in the movie *Santa Fe Trail*, I played George Custer as a young lieutenant. The captain said, 'You have got to take over.' And my line was 'I can't.' And the captain said, 'But it's your duty.' And that's the way I feel about this."

It is a mode of presidential decision-making ideal for suggestive scene-setters like Deaver. The ironic thing is that the "appearances" crowd were Reagan's relatively good angels, saving him time after time from the rubble-makers of the anti-communist crusade. War is not pretty; it rumples one's Galanos. Capitalists are notoriously willing to furnish the fashion-designer rope for their own dance under the lamppost.

Deaver has little to say on the substance of politics, though he assures us that he opposed the treatment of Russia as an evil empire, and thought the *contra* effort was doomed. His "thoughts" on politics seem to be a matter of enlarging the circle of his acquaintances. He boasted of his sessions with William Styron and Lillian Hellman, to the president's disgust ("Dammit, she still thinks Joe Stalin is great") but to Nancy's delight. When Deaver actually elicited a

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compliment from Jacqueline Onassis for his slim figure ("You're like a young Fred Astaire"), it was the high moment of the most important relationship of his political life: in the galley of his book, Deaver reported that Nancy Reagan had never seemed so taken with him as when he received that praise.

If Nancy's faction in the White House (which was Deaver's) preferred peace, it did so to enjoy the fruits of a guiltless greed. Such people laughed indulgently over Deaver's early attempts to cash in on his connections: the diet book to be written while still on the staff, his wife's publicity work, his scrambling for a German luxury car during the Bitburg preparations. Only after he left the White House could he take a nosedive straight into the cash, knowing it would soak him through this time.

Even his book is a form of influence-peddling—telling stories about his famous friends for pay. It is not a betrayal of such friendships to gain from them, since gain is the highest value in the world where the friendships were formed. The patrons may regret, but they cannot logically condemn, the actions of their subordinate. As Samuel Johnson wrote in *Rambler* 69: "No condition is more hateful or despicable than his who has put himself in the power of his servant; in the power of him who, perhaps, he has first corrupted by making him subservient to his vices, and whose fidelity he therefore cannot enforce by any precepts of honesty or reason." *Noblesse s'excuse*.

The great achievement of Ronald Reagan's years has been salesmanship, which made selling a more absolute value than statesmanship. "Under the spreading chestnut tree, I sold you and you sold me."

GARRY WILLS

Garry Wills is the author most recently of *Reagan's America: Innocents at Home* (Doubleday).

CORRECTION

In Robert Brustein's article on American set designers ("Designs for Living (Rooms)," February 1), the name of Heidi Landesman was inadvertently omitted from the list of Yale-trained scenic artists.

TRB, *from page 4*

corresponding doctrine on our side. The decline-of-the-West school of conservatism has long maintained that the democracies are too divided, too irresolute, too guilt-ridden, and too squeamish about violence to resist Soviet expansionism with any steadiness. Yet the American response to Russia's invasion of Afghanistan—a gigantic program of covert military aid and relentless diplomatic pressure—has been a model of steely resolve, carried out by two administrations of different parties and ideologies over a period of eight years with the virtually unanimous support of Congress and the people. The dogma of democratic fecklessness is due for reappraisal.

Success in Afghanistan, however, will not mean "success" in Nicaragua. The Russian collapse in Afghanistan undermines the geopolitical justification for the *contra* war in much the same way that the Sino-Soviet split and the Sino-U.S. rapprochement undermined the geopolitical justification for the Vietnam War. Afghanistan has exposed the Soviet empire as militarily weaker and strategically stupider than many Westerners had imagined. We are, therefore, and quite legitimately, that much less in thrall to what Jimmy Carter once wisely called "an inordinate fear of communism." (One doesn't need to have an inordinate fear of communism in order to oppose it, by the way.) With the Soviets in retreat in their back yard, we can better afford to calm down a bit about the mess in our own.

The decline-of-the-West crowd always warns us against likening the Russians in Afghanistan to the Americans in Vietnam, lest we fall victim to moral equivalence badthink and, worse, wishful thinking. The wishful thinking, at least, is looking pretty realistic these days. The parallels have been accumulating like Soviet citizens at a fresh fruit stand. At home, the same embittered veterans complaining of neglect, the same public disaffection (a French-run poll showed a 53 percent to 27 percent majority for cutting and running); "in country," the same drugs, the same contempt for the local lackeys, the same firepower versus the same fanaticism; in Geneva, the same quiet pleas for one superpower to help the other save face. Meanwhile, Gorbachev meets with Sakharov and *Krokodil* prints excerpts from Vassily Aksyonov's *In Search of Melancholy Baby*. Maybe the '60s didn't die after all. They just moved to Moscow.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

ert Kennedy on Vietnam, Mike Dukakis on taxes, and Paul Simon, who twice endorsed Dewey, now lauds Truman. Few would disagree with the wisdom of their decisions. John J. Pitney Jr. writes ("Neo-Gephardt," December 14), absent any context, that Dick Gephardt has also shifted position on some issues. That's no sin, as Pitney implies, it's leadership. As Dick says, "I'd rather change and be right than be rigid and be wrong."

When Jimmy Carter proposed a new Department of Education, Gephardt felt HEW could do the job. But when Reagan tried to eliminate DOE—not to reduce bureaucracy but to gut the federal role in education—Gephardt and the American Federation of Teachers switched positions to stop him. Dick's guiding principle has always been to change existing economic policies—from initiating tax reform to developing the alternative to the Senate-passed Gramm-Rudman budget bill to paving the way for congressional passage of a new trade policy—and he's the only Democratic presidential candidate with a consistent record of leadership on the economy.

HARRIETT WOODS
Lieutenant Governor
Missouri

DOUBLE TROUBLE

To the editors:

Robert Bazell's "Sins and Twins" (December 21) does not question the point of research. Suppose studies on twins reared apart show that intelligences, personality, and behavior are genetically rather then environmentally determined. Do we then institute different policies for different groups? Do we treat criminal behavior as an inherited disease? Do we "correct" parents' and babies' genes, or just limit the birthrate among those with undesirable traits? Unless we believe that social problems can be solved by scientific methods like genetic manipulation, this research is irrelevant, whatever its conclusions.

STEVEN TIGER
Monroe, New York

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Blues

I'VE READ TWO ACCOUNTS of Mikhail Gorbachev's audience with American "intellectuals and artists" during his recent visitation. The first was straight and sober, colorlessly and correctly grave, just the facts followed by the full text of Gorbachev's address, which did give the impression of new thought intruding here and there upon old language. The second was dizzy, childishly personal, a report on an epiphany, full of old thoughts in old language, utterly confused about the difference between a moment of history and a moment of celebrity. The first appeared in *Pravda*. The second appeared in the *New York Times*. *Pravda*'s piece was lacking, as usual, in vivacity ("... film actors R. De Niro and P. Newman; singer and public figure Y. Ono ..."), but the *Times*'s piece, by Joyce Carol Oates in the Sunday magazine, was all vivacity. Oates has written a small classic of credulity:

> And then there was a murmur of excitement, and the Gorbachevs were entering the room, and it was as if royalty had appeared in our midst; or media celebrities whose actual faces—youthful, high-colored, smiling, assured—were considerably more attractive than their reproductions. In newspaper photographs, Gorbachev has looked jowly, heavy-set, and stolid; in person, he fairly radiates energy and vigor, the warmth of a naturally charismatic leader who knows his worth and delights in its reflection in others' eyes. . . . To shake hands with Gorbachev—that is, to have one's hand shaken vigorously by Gorbachev—is to feel the grand conviction, no less powerful because it is absurd, that the man has hurried to you for this purpose alone; that, for a blurred moment, *you* are indeed the center of *his* universe.

Why are American "intellectuals and artists" so eager to surrender skepticism, so determined to be rapt? I thought I was born too late for such stuff. I was wrong.

SAW "WALL STREET" and wondered why nobody has seized upon the irony of Hollywood lecturing Wall Street about greed. It was Hollywood, not Wall Street, that trained an entire culture to measure works by "grosses," that promoted consumption of clinical proportions into an ideal of life, that conferred upon money the prestige of art. How much did this sermon against greed cost? (The answer, I'm told, is $15.7 million, which in Hollywood is practically for love.) And how much was Martin Sheen paid to personify the disgust with wealth? I imagine the film's makers conferring on their car phones about the scenes with car phones, picking at the sushi on their postmodern coffee tables as they hit upon the sushi falling through the postmodern coffee table, huddled beneath their pharaonic paintings wondering about the protagonist's pharaonic paintings. Gordon Gekko would have made a fine studio head. And Oliver Stone at his best reminds me of Vincente Minnelli at his worst. Another textbook lesson in the un-self-awareness of moralism.

BALLET IS ABOUT how people behave, Lincoln Kirstein once said. I reflected on the remark as my friend Daniel Duell told me the sordid story of ballet in Chicago, or rather, of the Chicago City Ballet. Duell was, until he moved to Chicago in September to become artistic director of the Chicago City Ballet, one of the finest of Balanchine's men, a principal dancer at the New York City Ballet. But the *danseur noble* found no dance and nothing noble waiting for him in Chicago. Instead (I quote O'Malley & Gratteau of the *Chicago Tribune*) "money has been a problem ever since developer Buzz Paschen withdrew his open checkbook, a move that followed a board move to limit the powers of his wife, CCB founder Maria Tallchief." Paschen is a local property mogul whose name is pronounced unworthily like "passion," and another banal believer in the divine right of real estate. He told the same paper a few weeks later: "When I realized in August that they no longer wanted my wife, who nurtured those dancers for so many years, I asked myself, Why should I support them?" And so the man, a villain out of Bellow, uxoriously wrecked the company. Funds were withdrawn, rents were no longer forgiven, performances were canceled, dancers were laid off. (They were evicted from their offices on 20 minutes' notice.) The tribune of beauty locked in struggle with the tribune of money: another adventure in fin-de-siècle America. But Duell and the dancers are not daunted. He is teaching class, and choreographing; they are taking class, and writing letters to the editor. When he talks about his plans for a classical repertory in his city, Duell sounds a little like Diaghilev, a little like Mickey Rooney. Idealism in Chicago is quite a trick.

I SHALL ALWAYS RESENT Anselm Kiefer for making me weep; a German has no right to make a Jew weep, not over Germany. And the sooner Kiefer's show (see "A Poet of the Apocalypse," page 27) reaches New York, the better, because in New York the poet of the apocalypse appears to be Robert Morris. Morris, too, is showing huge, constructed, canvas-like works about the Nazi hell. But there the similarity ends. Kiefer remembers; Morris is interested in memory. Kiefer tells of a wound; Morris, of an education. Kiefer makes symbols; Morris makes references. Last week the *Times* reproduced a detail of Morris's work, a photograph of the naked corpse of a beautiful woman (I have always considered this particular photograph to be the most obscene image I have ever seen; it scars the eyes, and now it, too, is in the papers, next to a restaurant review) magnified and silk-screened and ornately framed in a way that rightly reminds the *Times*'s critic of "a voluptuous nude ... by Gustav Klimt." Now, death may be voluptuous; but this was not death, this was murder. Morris's work is a new low in the aestheticization of Auschwitz, but the critic is admiring ("She could be in the midst of pleasure, even ecstasy. She is, in fact, dead.") and vainly rattles off Bernini, Zurbarán, Caravaggio, Tintoretto, Leonardo, "the radical sensibility of the '60s," Conceptual art, and so on. This reference racket will be the undoing of artists and critics alike. It will force real art right out of culture.

CONGRATULATIONS TO Rupert Murdoch upon his transformation into John Peter Zenger.

L. W.

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